JOHN E. RUSSELL

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

OF THE LATE

DR. MAGINN,

EDITED BY

DR. SHELTON MACKENZIE.

VOL. III.

Shakespeare Papers.

THE

SHAKESPEARE PAPERS

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM MAGINN, LL.D.

ANNOTATED BY

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EDITOR OF "SHEIL'S SKETCHES OF THE IRISH BAR"—"NOCTES AMBROSIANÆ," ETC.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

This volume contains the different articles on Shakespeare, by the late Dr. Maginn, which appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany* and *Fraser's Magazine*. They excited considerable attention, in this country as well as in England, when they were originally published, and are here first collected. They consist of essays or critical disquisitions upon certain prominent characters in Shakespeare's plays, and of a scholarly and extremely "slashing" analysis of, and attack upon, Dr. Farmer's Essay upon the Learning of Shakespeare, which was written to prove that the poet was ignorant of every language except the English, and obtained his classical allusions, as well as his knowledge of ancient mythology and history, exclusively from translations.

It has not been necessary to trouble the reader with much of my own annotations, in these pages (I have exclusively confined myself to matter of fact in my own notes), but I have freely drawn upon the highest literary authorities who have commented upon the life and writings of Shakespeare, in order that the reader might have their opinions, in accordance with or in opposition to Dr. Maginn's criticism, and thus have the advantage of immediate comparison of the new commentator with his most distinguished predecessors. I have, with this view, carefully sought, and largely, though not tediously, pressed into my service, the opinions of Campbell, Coleridge, Collier, De Quincey, Giles, Hazlitt, Hunter, Johnson, Knight, Verplanck, and Wilson, as well as of Mrs. Jamieson and Mrs.

Siddons. Here, also, will be found passages from German critics of high authority — Goethe, Schlegel, and Ulrici.

No doubt, there will be a great diversity of opinion, among Shakespearian readers, respecting the views which Dr. Maginn has taken of certain characters in the plays. It certainly does appear rather paradoxical that Falstaff, who is generally looked upon as a mere "tun of flesh," abounding in jest, a gross wine-bibber, braggart, and coward, should be presented as being wise as well as witty, not deficient in manly courage, possessing the courtly manners of an accomplished soldier, endowed with considerable intellect, and instead of being only a ribald jester, cherishing in his "heart of heart" deep regrets for the evanished spring-time of life, when he had "love, honor, and obedience, troops of friends," with, amid the riotous living into which he had fallen, high aspirations for a better mode of earthly existence. So, also, when Jaques, reflective and saddened in his forest haunts, instead of being exhibited as "melancholy and gentlemanlike," is shown as a mere humorist who has little cause for sorrowful contemplation, who follows the fancy of his head, and not the impulse of his heart, in moralizing upon the scenes in which he is placed, the characters whom he meets, and the incidents which occur within his observation. Falstaff, with an under-current of melancholy, and Jaques, with a substratum of mirth, may startle ordinary Shakespearian readers, but the arguments by which these conclusions are attained are unquestionably worth attention.

The exposition of the character of Polonius — almost invariably represented, on the stage, as a dotard — is more in accord with the estimate usually formed by those who *read* the tragedy of Hamlet. So, also, the idea of Romeo, as a sort of "Murad the Unlucky" of tragedy — of Bottom, as the incarnation of self-conceit — of Timon's misanthropy and Iago's devilish wiles — do not materially differ from the generally received views. Maginn's *rationale* of the character of Lady Macbeth — a paper on which he has evidently bestowed much thought — will probably surprise many readers, who had been used to think of her as an unsexed creature, whose violent ambition and strong passion and remorseless cruelty influenced her hus-

band, a man infirm of purpose, to plunge into a succession of the heaviest crimes in order to obtain the Scottish sceptre. In Maginn's paper, she is humanized, and a strong case in her favor is made out, to show her "more sinned against than sinning"—rather ruled than ruling.

Edward Kenealy (who wrote an excellent biography of Maginn, for the *Dublin University Magazine*), says that these papers "consist of some of the ablest and most beautiful characters of our dramatist that adorn the language. They incline a little too much, perhaps, to paradox, but their great ability is universally admitted. Combined with his 'Essay on Dr. Farmer' they form a most valuable and interesting body of facts, surmises, and annotations of our great poet." Maginn had long meditated critical editions of Homer and Shakespeare, but never had time to apply continuously to the labor. In this memoir, among recollections of Maginn's conversation, we have "Talking on one occasion about his 'Shakespeare Papers,' I asked him why he did not write the character of Hamlet? 'I have often thought of it,' he said, 'but never could make up my mind to it. *I am afraid* of him.'" On another occasion Maginn said, "I think Shakespeare intended The Tempest to be nothing more than a grand pantomime, in which he could lay aside all rules of composition, and allow his imagination to revel at will, without the fear of criticism; inserting in it many speeches and ideas that had long been floating in his fancy; and I think it was the last play he wrote." [De Quincey and Campbell also believe, with Malone, that in this drama, Shakespeare, like Prospero, symbolically broke his enchanter's wand.] Maginn told Kenealy that, whenever he had time, he would write a paper on Falstaff's Page. "Many a one like him," added he, "have I met in my time, in the shape of a printer's devil. He is the prince of all boys."

Much has been written on the *questio vexata* of Shakespeare's learning. His poetry so abounds with classical allusions that one might wonder how his scholarship could have been ever doubted. But Ben Jonson's declaration, as to his having had little Latin and less Greek, appears, from the first, to have been the foundation for a belief that he really was almost un-

educated. Hume, the historian, a writer who is well known to foreigners, declares that Shakespeare could not for any time uphold a reasonable propriety of thought. Nay, although scholarship was abundant, and even fashionable in his time (not only Ascham's gentle Scholar, the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, was "a scholar and a ripe one," but Elizabeth and the ladies of her court were acquainted with Latin and Greek, and taught even to speak the former), Hume speaks of him as "Born in a rude age, and educated without any instruction either from the world or from books." It appears a double anomaly that Shakespeare should have mixed in society, as a manager and author, with the leading writers of his time, as well as with some of the most distinguished of the nobility, without obtaining any "instruction from the world," and that he should have exhibited so many proofs of erudition without having had recourse to books.

For a long time, however, the general opinion was opposed to giving Shakespeare credit for the learning he must have possessed. Dr. Farmer's Essay, here dissected by Maginn, was published in 1766, and went through three editions in a few years. Its author was a very well-read man, and, on his death in 1797, the sale of his library occupied thirty-five days, and produced £2,200. Maginn, closely as he criticised the critic, by no means exhausted the subject.

The idea, so long a favorite with the commentators upon Shakespeare (including Addison, whose knowledge of English Literature was scanty, and Johnson, who appears to have gone through an extensive and constant perusal of the dramatic literature of the Elizabethan era), that Shakespeare was not noticed until the eighteenth century, is now generally admitted to be incorrect. He was personally noticed by Elizabeth, with all her faults one of the greatest — by James, with all his pedantry one of the most learned — of sovereigns. Sir Walter Scott has adroitly reminded us (in "Woodstock") that the volume containing Shakespeare's writings was the closet companion of Charles I. He obtained the warmest praise from contemporary and immediately succeeding poets of the first order — including Ben Jonson, Milton, and Dryden. At an age when, from various causes,

the sale of books was necessarily tardy, Shakespeare had four folio editions in sixty years — a period including the whole period of the Commonwealth, during which stage-playing was prohibited. That such a poet should have been so careless of his fame, as not to have himself collected and revised his writings, can only be accounted for by supposing that Shakespeare really did not imagine, when he was rapidly producing drama after drama, to supply a succession of novelties for his theatre, that he was actually writing things worthy of eternal regard and praise. Yet, only on this self-abnegation of his own merit can his practical contempt of fame be accounted for. This is not my own humble conjecture alone; — it also is the opinion of one of the best actors and dramatists now in this country.

It is strange that, as yet, the authentic information respecting Shakespeare is so scanty. I suspect that in the muniment-chests of the descendants of the Elizabethan nobles and squires, much valuable materials remain unknown. Of this there can be little doubt, when we recollect how much light was thrown upon Shakespeare's personal history, twenty years ago, by the publication of Mr. Collier's *New Facts regarding the Life of Shakespeare*, and *New Particulars regarding the Works of Shakespeare*, which were principally derived from the Ellesmere manuscripts, preserved at Bridgewater House, London, by the Earl of Ellesmere (better known, perhaps, as a man of letters, by his former titles of Lord Francis Leveson Gower, and Lord Francis Egerton), the present representative of that Lord Ellesmere, who is well known in English history as Keeper of the great seal to Queen Elizabeth, and Lord-Chancellor to James I. Among other ascertained incidents, recorded in these documents (which are principally legal and necessarily exact, therefore), is the important one which shows Shakespeare's connection with the Black Friar's Theatre (previously dated as having commenced in 1596), to have existed seven years earlier — for, in November, 1589, he appears, by the Ellesmere MSS., to have been one of the fifteen "sharers" or proprietors of that theatre. This was only two years after his arrival in London, and the fact that, in so brief an interval, he had attained such a position, goes far to disprove

the story that he had commenced his London career by holding horses at the playhouse-door.

It is probable that Shakespeare, during the period of his London life, had travelled into France and Italy. His descriptions of continental scenery are too faithful to have been derived from any thing short of personal observation, and his allusions to foreign manners and customs, are too accurate to have been suggested by others. The oversight of giving a seaport to the inland kingdom of Bohemia is constantly brought against him, to show his deficiency in geographical knowledge; but the persons who thus refer to it never think of condemning (and with equal justice they might) Virgil as a Know-Nothing as regards History, because he incorrectly made Æneas contemporary with Dido. — Those who, like myself, have visited most of the places in England and Scotland, which Shakespeare has brought into his dramas, will not readily believe that he could have described their leading features so clearly as he has done, without having actually seen them.

Collier regretfully admits that "after all that has been discovered and written, we really know so little about Shakespeare, that it is almost impossible to arrive at what even approaches certainty upon any point, excepting that he was the greatest dramatic poet that ever lived!" There is some plausibility in Maginn's conjecture — "The reason why we know so little of Shakespeare is, that when his business was over at the theatre, he did not mix with his fellow-actors, but stepped into his boat, and rowed up to Whitehall, there to spend his time with the Earl of Southampton, and other gentlemen about the court." — We must not despair of yet learning a good deal about Shakespeare. As it is, we really know less about him than we do of Chaucer, the father of English Poetry.

R. Shelton Mackenzie.

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SHAKESPEARE PAPERS.

PART I.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAYS.

DR. MAGINN'S

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS.

Shakespeare Papers.

No. I.—SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

"For those who read aright are well aware
That Jaques, sighing in the forest green,
Oft on his heart felt less the load of care
Than Falstaff, revelling his rough mates between."

MS. penes me.

"Jack Falstaff to my familiars!"—By that name, therefore, must he be known by all persons, for all are now the familiars of Falstaff. The title of "Sir John Falstaff to all Europe" is but secondary and parochial. He has long since far exceeded the limit by which he bounded the knowledge of his knighthood; and in wide-spreading territories, which in the day of his creation were untrodden by human foot, and in teeming realms where the very name of England was then unheard of, Jack Falstaff is known as familiarly as he was to the wonderful court of princes, beggars, judges, swindlers, heroes, bullies, gentlemen, scoundrels, justices, thieves, knights, tapsters, and the rest whom he drew about him.

It is indeed *his* court. He is lord paramount, the *suzerain* to whom all pay homage. Prince Hal may delude himself into the notion that he, the heir of England, with all the swelling emotions of soul that rendered him afterward the conqueror of France, makes a butt of the ton of man that is his companion. The parts are exactly reversed. In the peculiar circle in which they live, the prince is the butt of the knight. He knows it not—he would repel it with scorn if it were asserted; but it is nevertheless the fact that he is subdued. He calls the course of life which he leads, the unyoked humor of his idleness; but he mistakes. In all the paths where his journey lies with Falstaff, it is the hard-yoked servitude of his obedience. In the soliloquies put into his mouth he continually pleads that his present conduct is but that of the moment, that he is ashamed of his daily career, and that the time is ere long to come which will show him different from what he seems. As the dramatic character of Henry V. was conceived and executed by a man who knew how genius in any department of human intellect would work—to say nothing of the fact that Shakespeare wrote with the whole of the prince's career before him—we may consider this subjugation to Falstaff as intended to represent the transition state from spoiled youth to energetic manhood. It is useless to look for minute traces of the historical Henry in these dramas.* Tradition and the chronicles had handed him down to Shakespeare's time as a prince dissipated

* Mr. Verplanck (editor of the Illustrated Shakespeare, published by Harper and Brothers, New York) declares that "Shakespeare has brought out the prince's heroic character, by a bold and free paraphrase of his actual history." He says, "So striking and impressive are the individuality and life of the character, that it has been suggested that the Poet had the aid of traditionary knowledge to fill up the meagre outline of the chroniclers." Mr. Verplanck adds that, "Of all the strictly historical personages, Henry IV. himself, alone, seems drawn entirely and scrupulously from historical authority; and his is a portrait rivalling, in truth and discrimination, the happiest delineations of Plutarch or of Tacitus."—M.

in youth, and freely sharing in the rough debaucheries of the metropolis. The same vigor "that did affright the air at Agincourt" must have marked his conduct and bearing in any tumult in which he happened to be engaged. I do not know on what credible authority the story of his having given Gascoigne a box on the ear for committing one of his friends to prison may rest, and shall not at present take the trouble of inquiring.* It

*. In Knight's Illustrated Shakespeare there is a notice of, with extracts from, an old play, called "The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth," which was on the stage when Shakespeare wrote, and, probably, supplied him with the subject of the principal dramas in which Falstaff and the Prince more prominently appear. In the old play the Prince is committed, by the Lord-Mayor, to the counter (the Compter, even yet a prison in London), for rioting in the City, but escapes and enters the court where the Chief-Justice is sitting in judgment on Gadshill, the Prince's man, who robbed the carrier. The Judge threatens to hang the knave, and on his continued refusal to release him, gets a box on the ear from the Prince, who is at once committed to the Fleet Prison for "contempt" and the assault. In King Henry the Fourth, Part II. (Act I. Scene 2), Shakespeare makes Falstaff's page speak of the Lord-Chief-Justice, as "the nobleman that committed the prince for striking him about Bardolph." In Act V. Scene 2, is recorded the truly noble manner in which the Prince, then newly succeeded to the Crown, displays moderation and magnanimity in thanking, instead of hostilely remembering, the judge for his independent conduct. As to the actual *fact* of such an incident, the authorities are at variance. Hollinshed, the historian, from whom Shakespeare drew largely, records the circumstance of the Prince's insolence and his commitment to prison. So does Hall, and so (more minutely still) does Sir Thomas Elyot, in his book of political ethics, called, "The Governeur." None of them mention the after conduct of the Prince. On the other hand, several commentators and critics deny the historical fact. Several add, that Chief-Justice Gascoigne died in the lifetime of Henry IV., so that Prince Henry, as King, could not have made the *amende*, as recorded in the drama. Others allege that Gascoigne survived, but was not re-appointed. Stowe declares that Gascoigne was Chief-Justice from the sixth of Henry IV. to the third of Henry V. Mr. Verplanck refers to an American author (George Gibbs, of New York), whose "Judicial Chronicle," published in 1834, contains an exact chronological list of the earlier English judges of the higher courts of England and America, in which Gascoigne is mentioned as having died or retired in 1414, the second year of Henry V. It is not probable that Shakespeare, who generally adhered to historical truth, invented what has been called "the fine lesson of political magnanimity to a personal adversary," so spiritedly given in King Henry the Fourth, Part II.—M.

is highly probable that the chief justice amply deserved the cuffing, and I shall always assume the liberty of doubting that he committed the prince. That, like a "sensible lord," he should have hastened to accept any apology which should have relieved him from a collision with the ruling powers of court, I have no doubt at all, from a long consideration of the conduct and history of chief justices in general.

More diligent searchers into the facts of that obscure time have seen reason to disbelieve the stories of any serious dissipations of Henry. Engaged as he was from his earliest youth in affairs of great importance, and with a mind trained to the prospect of powerfully acting in the most serious questions that could agitate his time — a disputed succession, a rising hostility to the church, divided nobility, turbulent commons, an internecine war with France impossible of avoidance, a web of European diplomacy just then beginning to develop itself, in consequence of the spreading use of the pen and ink-horn so pathetically deplored by Jack Cade, and forerunning the felonious invention, "contrary to the king's crown and dignity," of the printing-press, denounced with no regard to chronology by that illustrious agitator; — in these circumstances, the heir of the house of Lancaster, the antagonist of the Lollards — a matter of accident in his case, though contrary to the general principles of his family — and at the same time suspected by the churchmen of dangerous designs against their property — the pretender on dubious title, but not at the period appearing so decidedly defective as it seems in ours, to the throne of France — the aspirant to be arbiter or master of all that he knew of Europe — could not have wasted all his youth in riotous living.* In fact, his historical character is stern and severe; but with that we have here nothing to do. It is not the Henry of

* Shakespeare derived his idea of Prince Henry's wild youth from Hollinshed, Hall, and other historians, as well as from tradition.—M.

battles, and treaties, and charters, and commissions, and parliaments, we are now dealing with;—we look to the Henry of Shakespeare.

That Henry, I repeat, is subject and vassal of Falstaff. He is bound by the necromancy of genius to the "white-bearded Satan," who he feels is leading him to perdition. It is in vain that he thinks it utterly unfitting that he should engage in such an enterprise as the robbery at Gadshill; for, in spite of all protestations to the contrary, he joins the expedition merely to see how his master will get through his difficulty. He struggles hard, but to no purpose. Go he must, and he goes accordingly. A sense of decorum keeps him from participating in the actual robbery; but he stands close by, that his resistless sword may aid the dubious valor of his master's associates. Joining with Poins in the jest of scattering them and seizing their booty, not only is no harm done to Falstaff, but a sense of remorse seizes on the prince for the almost treasonable deeds—

> "Falstaff sweats to death,
> And lards the lean earth as he walks along;
> Wer't not for laughing, *I should pity him.*"

At their next meeting, after detecting and exposing the stories related by the knight, how different is the result from what had been predicted by Poins when laying the plot! "The virtue of this jest will be, the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper: how thirty, at least, he fought with; what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lies the jest." Reproof indeed! All is detected and confessed. Does Poins *reprove* him, interpret the word as we will? Poins indeed! That were *lèze majesté*. Does the prince? Why, he tries a jest, but it breaks down; and Falstaff victoriously orders sack and merriment with an accent of command not to be disputed. In a moment after he is selected to meet Sir John Bracy, sent

special with the villanous news of the insurrection of the Percies; and in another moment he is seated on his joint-stool, the mimic King of England, lecturing with a mixture of jest and earnest the real Prince of Wales.

Equally inevitable is the necessity of screening the master from the consequence of his deliquencies, even at the expense of a very close approximation to saying the thing that is not; and impossible does Hal find it not to stand rebuked when the conclusion of his joke of taking the tavern-bills from the sleeper behind the arras is the enforced confession of being a pick-pocket. Before the austere king his father, John his sober-blooded brother, and other persons of gravity or consideration, if Falstaff be in presence, the prince is constrained by his star to act in defence and protection of the knight. Conscious of the carelessness and corruption which mark all the acts of his guide, philosopher, and friend, it is yet impossible that he should not recommend him to a command in a civil war which jeoparded the very existence of his dynasty. In the heat of the battle and the exultation of victory he is obliged to yield to the fraud that represents Falstaff as the actual slayer of Hotspur. Prince John quietly remarks, that the tale of Falstaff is the strangest that he ever heard: his brother, who has won the victory, is content with saying that he who has told it is the strangest of fellows. Does he betray the cheat? Certainly not—it would have been an act of disobedience; but in privy council he suggests to *his* prince in a whisper,

"Come, bring your luggage [the body of Hotspur] *nobly*—"

nobly—as becomes your rank in *our* court, so as to do the whole of your followers, myself included, honor by the appearance of their master—

"Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back;
For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have."

Tribute, this, from the future Henry V.! Deeper tribute, however, is paid in the scene in which state necessity induces the renunciation of the fellow with the great belly who had misled him. Poins had prepared us for the issue. The prince had been grossly abused in the reputable hostelrie of the Boar's Head while he was thought to be out of hearing. When he comes forward with the intention of rebuking the impertinence, Poins, well knowing the command to which he was destined to submit, exclaims: "My lord, he will drive you out of your revenge, and turn all to merriment, if you take not the heat." Vain caution! The scene, again, ends by the total forgetfulness of Falstaff's offence, and his being sent for to court. When, therefore, the time had come that considerations of the highest importance required that Henry should assume a more dignified character, and shake off his dissolute companions, his own experience and the caution of Poins instruct him that if the thing be not done on the heat — if the old master-spirit be allowed one moment's ground of vantage — the game is up, the good resolutions dissipated into thin air, the grave rebuke turned all into laughter, and thoughts of anger or prudence put to flight by the restored supremacy of Falstaff. Unabashed and unterrified he has heard the severe rebuke of the king: — "I know thee not, old man," &c., until an opportunity offers for a repartee: —

> "Know, the grave doth gape
> For thee thrice wider than for other men."

Some joke on the oft-repeated theme of his unwieldy figure was twinkling in Falstaff's eye, and ready to leap from his tongue. The king saw his danger: had he allowed a word, he was undone. Hastily, therefore, does he check that word: —

> "Reply not to me with a fool-born jest;"

forbidding, by an act of eager authority — what he must also have felt to be an act of self-control — the outpouring of those magic sounds which, if uttered, would, instead of a prison be-

coming the lot of Falstaff, have conducted him to the coronation dinner, and established him as chief depositary of what in after-days was known by the name of backstairs' influence.

In this we find the real justification of what has generally been stigmatized as the harshness of Henry. Dr. Johnson, with some indignation, asks why should Falstaff be sent to the Fleet?—he had done nothing since the king's accession to deserve it. I answer, he was sent to the Fleet for the same reason that he was banished ten miles from court, on pain of death. Henry thought it necessary that the walls of a prison should separate him from the seducing influence of one than whom he knew many a better man, but none whom it was so hard to miss. He felt that he could not, in his speech of predetermined severity, pursue to the end the tone of harshness toward his old companion. He had the nerve to begin by rebuking him in angry terms as a surfeit-swelled, profane old man—as one who, instead of employing in prayer the time which his hoary head indicated was not to be of long duration in this world, disgraced his declining years by assuming the unseemly occupations of fool and jester—as one whom he had known in a dream, but had awakened to despise—as one who, on the verge of the gaping grave, occupied himself in the pursuits of such low debauchery as excluded him from the society of those who had respect for themselves or their character. But he can not so continue; and the last words he addresses to him whom he had intended to have cursed altogether, hold forth a promise of advancement, with an affectionate assurance that it will be such as is suitable to his "strength and qualities." If in public he could scarce master his speech, how could he hope in private to master his feeling? No. His only safety was in utter separation: it should be done, and he did it.* He was emancipated

* Hazlitt says, "The truth is, that we never could forgive the Prince's treatment of Falstaff, though perhaps Shakespeare knew what was best, according

by violent effort; did he never regret the ancient thraldom? Shakespeare is silent: but may we not imagine that he who sate crowned with the golden rigol of England, cast, amid all his splendors, many a sorrowful thought upon that old familiar face which he had sent to gaze upon the iron bars of the Fleet?

As for the chief justice, he never appears in Falstaff's presence, save as a butt.* His grave lordship has many solemn admonitions, nay, serious threats to deliver; but he departs laughed at and baffled. Coming to demand explanation of the affair at Gadshill, the conversation ends with his being asked for the loan of a thousand pounds. Interposing to procure payment of the debt to Dame Quickly, he is told that she goes about the town saying that her eldest son resembles him. Fang and Snare, his lordship's officers, are not treated with less respect, or shaken off with less ceremony. As for the other followers of the knight—Pistol, Nim, Bardolph—they are, by office, his obsequious dependants. But it is impossible that they could long hang about him without contracting, unknown even to themselves, other feelings than those arising from the mere advantages they derived from his service. Death is the test of all; and when that of Falstaff approaches, the dogged Nym reproaches the king for having run bad humors on the knight; and Pistol in swelling tone, breathing a sigh over his heart "fracted and corroborate," hastens to condole with him. Bardolph wishes that he was with him wheresoever he has gone, whether to heaven or hell: he has followed him all his life—why not follow him in death? The last jest had been at his

to the history, the nature of the times, and of the men. We speak only as dramatic critics. Whatever terror the French, in those days, might have had of Henry V., yet to the reader of poetry at present, Falstaff is the better man of the two. We think of him, and quote him oftener."—M.

* The colloquies between Falstaff and the Chief-Justice are to be found in King Henry the Fourth, Part II., Act I., Scene 1, in Act II., Scene 1, and in Act V., Scene 5.—M.

own expense; but what matters it now? In other times Bardolph could resent the everlasting merriment at the expense of his nose—he might wish it in the belly of the jester; but that's past. The dying knight compares a flea upon his follower's nose to a black soul burning in hell-fire; and no remonstrance is now made. "Let him joke as he likes," says and thinks Bardolph with a sigh, "the fuel is gone that maintained that fire. He never will supply it more; nor will it, in return, supply fuel for his wit. I wish that it could." And Quickly, whom he had for nine-and-twenty years robbed and cheated—pardon me, I must retract the words—from whom he had, for the space of a generation, levied tax and tribute as a matter of right and due—she hovers anxiously over his dying bed, and, with a pathos and a piety well befitting her calling, soothes his departing moments by the consolatory assurance, when she hears him uttering the unaccustomed appeal to God, that he had no necessity for yet troubling himself with thoughts to which he had been unused during the whole length of their acquaintance. Blame her not for leaving unperformed the duty of a chaplain: it was not her vocation. She consoled him as she could—and the kindest of us can do no more.

Of himself, the centre of the circle, I have, perhaps, delayed too long to speak; but the effect which he impresses upon all the visionary characters around, marks Shakespeare's idea that he was to make a similar impression on the real men to whom he was transmitting him. The temptation to represent the gross fat man upon the stage as a mere buffoon, and to turn the attention of the spectators to the corporal qualities and the practical jests of which he is the object, could hardly be resisted by the players; and the popular notion of the Falstaff of the stage is, that he is no better than an upper-class Scapin.* A

* Mr. Verplanck says, "In a more literal sense, he is the most original as well as the most real of all comic creations—a character of which many

proper consideration, not merely of the character of his mind as displayed in the lavish abundance of ever-ready wit, and the sound good sense of his searching observation, but of the position which he always held in society, should have freed the Falstaff of the cabinet from such an imputation. It has not generally done so. Nothing can be more false, nor, *pace tanti viri*, more unphilosophical, than Dr. Johnson's critique upon his character. According to him:—

"Falstaff is a character loaded with faults, and with those faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief and a glutton, a coward and a boaster, always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous, and insult the defenceless. At once obsequious and malignant, he satirizes in their absence those whom he lives by flattering. He is familiar with the prince only as an agent of vice, but of this familiarity he is so proud, as not only to be supercilious and haughty with common men, but to think his interests of importance to the Duke of Lancaster. Yet the man thus corrupt, thus despicable, makes himself necessary to the prince that despises him, by the most pleasing of all qualities, perpetual gayety; by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged, as his wit is not of the splendid or ambitious kind, but consists in easy scapes and sallies of levity, which make sport, but raise no envy. It must be observed, that he is stained with no enormous or sanguinary crimes, so that his licentiousness is not so offensive but that it may be borne for his mirth.

"The moral to be drawn from this representation is, that no man is more dangerous than he that, with a will to corrupt,

traits and peculiarities must have been gleaned, as their air of reality testifies, from the observation of actual life; and yet, with all his ponderous and tangible reality, as much a creature of the Poet's 'fugitive fancy' as the delicate Ariel himself. In his peculiar originality, Falstaff is to be classed only with the Poet's own Hamlet, and the Spanish Don Quixote."—M.

hath the power to please; and that neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion, when they see Henry seduced by Falstaff."

What can be cheaper than the venting of moral apophthegms such as that which concludes the critique? Shakespeare, who had no notion of copy-book ethics, well knew that Falstaffs are not as plenty as blackberries, and that the moral to be drawn from the representation is no more than that great powers of wit will fascinate, whether they be joined or not to qualities commanding grave esteem. In the commentary I have just quoted, the Doctor was thinking of such companions as Savage; but the interval is wide and deep.

How idle is the question as to the cowardice of Falstaff. Maurice Morgann wrote an essay to free his character from the allegation;* and it became the subject of keen controversy, Deeply would the knight have derided the discussion. His retreat from before Prince Henry and Poins, and his imitating death when attacked by Douglas, are the points mainly dwelt upon by those who make him a coward. I shall not minutely go over what I conceive to be a silly dispute on both sides: but in the former case Shakespeare saves his honor by making him offer at least some resistance to two bold and vigorous men when abandoned by his companions; and, in the latter, what

* Morgann, whose "Essay on the Character of Falstaff" is here referred to, spent his life, chiefly, in diplomatic and political pursuits, and was secretary of the embassy for the Treaty of Peace of 1783, acknowledging the independence of the United States. Morgann contended ("quite ineffectually," says Mr. Verplanck) that *courage* was one of Falstaff's attributes. Henry Mackenzie declined going to this length, but said that his very cowardice was "not so much a weakness as a principle," and that Falstaff "has the sense of danger, without the discomposure of fear." A former critic considered Falstaff "a living parody on the chivalry of the age." Cervantes, who produced Don Quixote some years after the character of Falstaff was created, might have been indebted for the idea to Shakespeare, his contemporary?—M.

fitting antagonist was the fat and blown soldier of three-score for:—

> "That furious Scot,
> The bloody Douglas, whose well-laboring sword
> Had three times slain the appearance of the king?'

He did no more than what Douglas himself did in the conclusion of the fight: overmatched, the renowned warrior:—

> "'Gan vail his stomach, and did grace the shame
> Of those that turned their backs; and, in his flight,
> Stumbling in fear, was took."

Why press cowardice on Falstaff more than upon Douglas? In an age when men of all ranks engaged in personal conflict, we find him chosen to a command in a slaughterous battle; he leads his men to posts of imminent peril; it is his sword which Henry wishes to borrow when about to engage Percy, and he refuses to lend it from its necessity to himself; he can jest coolly in the midst of danger; he is deemed worthy of employing the arm of Douglas at the time that Hotspur engages the prince; Sir John Coleville yields himself his prisoner; and, except in the jocular conversations among his own circle, no word is breathed that he has not performed, and is not ready to perform, the duties of a soldier. Even the attendant of the chief justice, with the assent of the hostile lordship, admits that he has done good service at Shrewsbury. All this, and much more, is urged in his behalf by Maurice Morgann; but it is far indeed from the root of the matter.

Of his being a thief and a glutton I shall say a few words anon; but where does he cheat the weak or prey upon the poor —where terrify the timorous or insult the defenceless—where is he obsequious, where malignant—where is he supercilious and haughty with common men—where does he think his interest of importance to the Duke of Lancaster? Of this last charge I see nothing whatever in the play. The "Duke" of

Lancaster* is a slip of the Doctor's pen. But Falstaff nowhere extends his patronage to Prince John; on the contrary, he asks from the prince the favor of his good report to the king, adding, when he is alone, that the sober-blooded boy did not love him. He is courteous of manner; but, so far from being obsequious, he assumes the command wherever he goes. He is jocularly satirical of speech; but he who has attached to him so many jesting companions for such a series of years, never could have been open to the reproach of malignity. If the sayings of Johnson himself about Goldsmith and Garrick, for example, were gathered, must he not have allowed them to be far more calculated to hurt their feelings than anything Falstaff ever said of Poins or Hal? and yet would he not recoil from the accusation of being actuated by malignant feelings toward men whom, in spite of wayward conversations, he honored, admired, and loved?

Let us consider for a moment who and what Falstaff was. If you put him back to the actual era in which his date is fixed, and judge him by the manners of that time; a knight of the days perhaps of Edward III.—at all events of Henry IV.—was a man not to be confounded with the knights spawned in our times. A knight then was not far from the rank of peer; and with peers, merely by the virtue of his knighthood, he habitually associated as their equal. Even if we judge of him by the repute of knights in the days when his character was written—and in dealing with Shakespeare it is always safe to

* He is once called so by Westmoreland, Second Part of Henry IV. Act IV. Scene 1:—

"Health and fair greeting from our general,
The prince Lord John and Duke of Lancaster;"

but it occurs nowhere else, and we must not place much reliance on the authenticity or the verbal accuracy of such verses. He was Prince John of Lancaster, and afterward Duke of Bedford. The king was then, as the king is now, Duke of Lancaster.—W. M.

consider him as giving himself small trouble to depart from the manners which he saw around him — the knights of Elizabeth were men of the highest class. The queen conferred the honor with much difficulty, and insisted that it should not be disgraced. Sir John Falstaff, if his mirth and wit inclined him to lead a reckless life, held no less rank in the society of the day than the Earl of Rochester in the time of Charles II. Henry IV. disapproves of his son's mixing with the loose revellers of the town; but admits Falstaff unreproved to his presence. When he is anxious to break the acquaintance, he makes no objection to the station of Sir John, but sends him with Prince John of Lancaster against the archbishop and the Earl of Northumberland. His objection is not that the knight, by his rank, is no fitting companion for a son of his own, but that he can better trust him with the steadier than the more mercurial of the brothers.

We find by incidental notices that he was reared, when a boy, page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, head of one of the greatest houses that ever was in England, and the personal antagonist of him who was afterward Henry IV.; that he was in his youth on familiar terms with John of Gaunt, the first man of the land after the death of his father and brother; and that, through all his life, he had been familiar with the lofty and distinguished.* We can, therefore, conjecture what had

* It is stated, on the authority of Rowe and Fuller, that the character now known as Falstaff, was originally put upon the stage by Shakespeare, as Sir John Oldcastle, but the change was made because Oldcastle really was a grave, religious man, and not a jovial royster and coward. In truth, however, the character of Sir John Oldcastle occurs in the old play of "King Henry V.," which probably supplied Shakespeare with the idea of the dramas in which the fat knight takes so large a part. The true story of Falstaff may not be out of place here. He was born in 1379. His father, John Fastolfe, who was a Yarmouth mariner, died early. According to the custom of the feudal times, the boy was placed under the guardianship of John Duke of Bedford, the regent of France. He afterward accompanied to Ireland, Thomas Duke of Clarence, on his appointment to the governorship of that

been his youth and his manhood; we see what he actually is in declining age. In this, if I mistake not, will be found the

country. While there, on St. Hilary's day, 1409, he married Millicent, daughter of Sir Robert Tiptoft, and widow of Sir Stephen Scroope, whom, on his wedding-day, he contracted to allow £100 per annum for pin-money; this sum was regularly paid until her death, which took place during her husband's lifetime. The vice-regent's court appears not to have suited the taste of Falstaff, who was more addicted to fighting than lounging about in idleness. He soon, therefore, assumed another character, and, having buckled on his armor, proceeded to France, where abundance of glory was to be obtained. There, his bravery soon made him known. In the accounts of most of the engagements of that period, Falstaff's name occurs in the list of combatants. In Normandy, Gascony, Guienne, Anjou, and Maine, his arm helped to sustain the British power. When Harfleur was taken in 1415, he was made lieutenant of the place, and shortly afterward received the honor of knighthood. At Agincourt, he took a noble prisoner — no less a person than the Duke of Alençon. He was in the midst of the strife at the taking of Rouen, Caen, Falaise, and Secz, and stormed numbers of strong fortresses and castles; among others, the castle of Sillé le Guillaume, for the capture of which he was rewarded by the title of baron in France. Among other honors poured upon him, he was elected a Knight of the Garter. At his election, there were an equal number of votes for our knight and Sir John Radcliffe; whereupon the Duke of Bedford gave the casting vote in favor of Falstaff, and sent him a letter abounding with expressions of praise. Monstralet states, in his "Chronicle," that Falstaff was degraded from the order on account of his dastardly conduct at the battle of Patay, where he and his followers, being struck with terror at the appearance of the mysterious Joan of Arc, took to their heels, and left the French army in possession of the field. This tale, unsupported by another testimony, is utterly false; for although it is a fact that Sir John was put to flight at Patay, the tale of his being degraded from the Order of the Garter, is proved untrue by the circumstance of his regular attendance at the chapters of the order long after the period at which his degradation is stated to have taken place. The crowning exploit of Sir John was his brave conduct at the battle of the Herrings. With a small band of Englishmen, he routed a numerous French army, commanded by "*le jeune et beau Dunois*" himself. The battle got its name from the circumstance of our knight making a kind of fortification with his wagons, which were for the most part full of herrings; for, besides the army being led by a Yarmouth man, the season was Lent, and these two circumstances combined, show the reason of his carrying so large a quantity of that small but excellent fish. The year following the affair at Patay found Sir John lieutenant of Caen; and he was sent in 1432 as embassador to the council of Basel, where he seems to have fulfilled his duty satisfactorily, for he was afterward sent to conclude a peace with France. A few years after

true solution of the character; here is what the French call the *mot d'énigme*. Conscious of powers and talents far surpassing those of the ordinary run of men, he finds himself outstripped in the race. He must have seen many a man whom he utterly despised rising over his head to honors and emoluments. The very persons upon whom, it would appear to Doctor Johnson, he was intruding, were many of them his early companions—many more his juniors at court. He might have attended his old patron, the duke, at Coventry, upon St. Lambert's day, when Richard II. flung down the warder amidst the greatest men of England. If he jested in the tilt-yard with John of Gaunt, could he feel that any material obstacle prevented him from mixing with those who composed the court of John of Gaunt's son.

In fact, he is a dissipated man of rank, with a thousand times more wit than ever fell to the lot of all the men of rank in the world. But he has ill played his cards in life. He grumbles not at the advancement of men of his own order; but the bitter drop of his soul overflows when he remembers how he and that cheeseparing Shallow began the world, and reflects that

this event, the good old knight retired from service, with glory and renown; he turned his steps toward his native place, and, building a castle at Caistor (a small village in Norfolk, three miles north of Yarmouth), there spent the remainder of his life. He died in 1459, and was buried at the priory of Broomholm. His resting-place while dead, and his habitation while living, have bowed before the stroke of time, and nothing now remains but a few mouldering, crumbling walls. In his retirement, Sir John was not oblivious of the advantages of learning. In that age, little encouragement was given to literature; but to that little, he contributed a part. The translation of Tully de Senectute was made by his order, and printed by the father of English printing. To Oxford, he was a bountiful benefactor; nor was he forgetful of the sister university of Cambridge. He was intent in his old age upon founding a college for seven priests, and the same number of poor men: but unexpected difficulties arrested its progress, and death proved an irresistible obstacle to its completion. Such was the Falstaff of fact, a soldier of courage and conduct, and altogether, for his age, a worthy and respectable character.—M.

the starveling justice has land and beeves, while he, the wit and the gentleman, is penniless, and living from hand to mouth by the casual shifts of the day. He looks at the goodly dwelling and the riches of him whom he had once so thoroughly contemned, with an inward pang that he has scarcely a roof under which he can lay his head. The tragic Macbeth, in the agony of his last struggle, acknowledges with a deep despair, that the things that should accompany old age — as honor, love, obedience, troops of friends — he must not look to have. The comic Falstaff says nothing on the subject; but, by the choice of such associates as Bardolph, Pistol, and the rest of that following, he tacitly declares that he too has lost the advantages which should be attendant on years. No curses loud or deep have accompanied his festive career — its conclusion is not the less sad on that account: neglect, forgotten friendships, services overlooked, shared pleasures unremembered, and fair occasions gone for ever by, haunt him, no doubt, as sharply as the consciousness of deserving universal hatred galls the soul of Macbeth.

And we may pursue the analogy farther without any undue straining. All other hope lost, the confident tyrant shuts himself up in what he deems an impregnable fortress, and relies for very safety upon his interpretation of the dark sayings of riddling witches. Divested of the picturesque and supernatural horror of the tragedy, Macbeth is here represented as driven to his last resource, and dependent for life only upon chances, the dubiousness of which he can hardly conceal from himself. The Boar's Head in Eastcheap is not the castle of Dunsinane, any more than the conversation of Dame Quickly and Doll Tearsheet is that of the Weird Sisters; but in the comedy, too, we have the man, powerful in his own way, driven to his last "frank," and looking to the chance of the hour for the living of the hour. Hope after hope has broken down, as

prophecy after prophecy has been discovered to be juggling and fallacious. He has trusted that *his* Birnam Wood would not come to Dunsinane, and yet it comes;—that no man not of woman born is to cross his path, and lo! the man is here. What then remains for wit or warrior when all is lost—when the last stake is gone—when no chance of another can be dreamt of—when the gleaming visions that danced before their eyes are found to be nothing but mist and mirage? What remains for them but to die?—And so they do.

With such feelings, what can Falstaff, after having gone through a life of adventure, care about the repute of courage or cowardice? To divert the prince, he engages in a wild enterprise—nothing more than what would be called a "lark" now. When deer-stealing ranked as no higher offence than robbing orchards—not indeed so high as the taking a slice off a loaf by a wandering beggar, which some weeks ago has sent the vagrant who committed the "crime" to seven years' transportation—such robberies as those at Gadshill, especially as all parties well knew that the money taken there was surely to be repaid, as we find it is in the end,* were of a comparatively venial nature.

* Henry IV. Part 1. Act III. Sc. 3.

"*Fal.* Now Hal, to the news at court: for the robbery, lad?
How is that answered?
P. Hen. My sweet beef, I must
Still be good angel to thee.
The money is paid back.
Fal. I do not like
That paying back; it is a double labor.
P. Hen. I am good friends with my father, and may do anything.
Fal. Rob me the exchequer, the first thing thou dost;
And do it with unwashed hands too.
Bard. Do, my lord."

The quiet and business-like manner in which Bardolph enforces on the heir-apparent his master's reasonable proposition of robbing the exchequer, is worthy of that plain and straightforward character. I have always considered it a greater hardship that Bardolph should be hanged "for pix of little price" by an old companion at Gadshill, than that Falstaff should have

Old father antic, the Law, had not yet established his undoubted supremacy; and taking purses, even in the days of Queen Elizabeth, was not absolutely incompatible with gentility. The breaking up of the great households and families by the wars of the Roses, the suppression of the monasteries and the confiscation of church property by Henry VIII., added to the adventurous spirit generated throughout all Europe by the discovery of America, had thrown upon the world "men of action," as they called themselves, without any resources but what lay in their hands. Younger members of broken houses, or aspirants for the newly lost honors or the ease of the cloister, did not well know what to do with themselves. They were too idle to dig; they were ashamed to beg;—and why not apply at home the admirable maxim:—

> "That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can,"

which was acted upon with so much success beyond the sea. The same causes which broke down the nobility, and crippled the resources of the church, deprived the retainers of the great baron, and the sharers of the dole of the monastery, of their accustomed mode of living; and robbery in these classes was considered the most venial of offences. To the system of poor laws—a system worthy of being projected "in great Eliza's golden time" by the greatest philosopher of that day, or, with one exception of any other day—are we indebted for that general respect for property which renders the profession of a

been banished. But Shakespeare wanted to get rid of the party; and as, in fact, a soldier was hanged in the army of Henry V. for such a theft, the opportunity was afforded. The king is not concerned in the order for the execution, however, which is left with the Duke of Exeter. I have omitted a word or two from the ordinary edition in the above quotation, which are useless to the sense and spoil the metre. A careful consideration of Falstaff's speeches will show that, though they are sometimes printed as prose, they are in almost all cases metrical. Indeed, I do not think that there is much prose in any of Shakespeare's plays.—W. M.

thief infamous, and consigns him to the hulks, or the tread-mill, without compassion. But I must not wander into historical disquisitions; though no subject would, in its proper place, be more interesting than a minute speculation upon the gradual working of the poor-law system on English society. It would form one of the most remarkable chapters in that great work yet to be written: "The History of the *Lowest* Order from the earliest times"—a work of far more importance, of deeper philosophy, and more picturesque romance, than all the chronicles of what are called the great events of the earth. Elsewhere let me talk of this. I must now get back again to Falstaff.*

His Gadshill adventure was a jest—a jest, perhaps, repeated after too many precedents; but still, according to the fashion and the humor of the time, nothing more than a jest. His own view of such transactions is recorded; he considers Shallow as a fund of jesting to amuse the prince, remarking that it is easy to amuse "with a sad brow" (with a solemnity of appearance)

* "This is, perhaps, the most substantial comic character that ever was invented. . . . . Falstaff's wit is an emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good-humor and good-nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter and good fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease and overcontentment with himself and others. . . . . We are not to suppose he was a mere sensualist. All this is as much in imagination as in reality. His sensuality does not engross and stupify his other faculties, but 'ascends me into the brain, clears away all the dull, crude vapors that environ it, and makes it full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes.' His imagination keeps up the ball after his senses have done with it. . . . . He is represented as a liar, a braggart, a coward, a glutton, &c., and yet we are not offended but delighted with him; for he is all these as much to amuse others as to gratify himself. He openly assumes all these characters to show the humorous part of them. . . . . The secret of Falstaff's wit is, for the most part, a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession, which nothing can disturb."—Hazlitt. This author also quotes the scene with Mrs. Quickly, when she sums up what he owes her, and how, as "the most convincing proof of Falstaff's power of gaining over the good will of those he was familiar with, except, indeed, Bardolph's somewhat profane exclamation on hearing the account of his death, 'would I were with him, wheresoe'er he is, whether in heaven or hell.'"—M.

"a fellow that never had the ache in his shoulders." What was to be accomplished by turning the foolish justice into ridicule, was also to be done by inducing the true prince to become for a moment a false thief. The serious face of robbery was assumed "to keep Prince Harry in perpetual laughter." That, in Falstaff's circumstances, the money obtained by the night's exploit would be highly acceptable, can not be doubted; but the real object was to amuse the prince. He had no idea of making an exhibition of bravery on such an occasion; Poins well knew his man when he said beforehand: "As for the third, if he fight longer than he see reason, I'll forswear arms:" his end was as much obtained by the prince's jokes upon his cowardice. It was no matter whether he invented what tended to laughter, or whether it was invented upon him. The object was won, so the laughter was in any manner excited. The exaggerated tale of the misbegotten knaves in Kendal-green, and his other lies, gross and mountainous, are told with no other purpose; and one is almost tempted to believe him when he says that he knew who were his assailants, and ran for their greater amusement. At all events, it is evident that he cares nothing on the subject. He offers a jocular defence; but immediately passes to matter of more importance than the question of his standing or running:—

> "But, lads, I'm glad you have the money. Hostess!
> Clap to the doors; watch to-night, pray to-morrow,
> Gallants, lads, boys, hearts-o'-gold! All the titles of
> Good fellowship come to you!"*

The money is had; the means of enjoying it are at hand. Why waste our time in inquiring how it has been brought here,

* These passages also are printed as prose; I have not altered a single letter, and the reader will see not only that they are dramatical blank-verse, but dramatical blank-verse of a very excellent kind. After all the editions of Shakespeare, another is sadly wanted. The text throughout requires a searching critical revision.—W. M.

or permit nonsensical discussions on my valor or cowardice to delay for a moment the jovial appearance of the bottle.

I see no traces of his being a glutton. His roundness of paunch is no proof of gormandizing propensities; in fact, the greatest eaters are generally thin and spare. When Henry is running over the bead-roll of his vices, we meet no charge of gluttony urged against him.

> "There is a devil
> Haunts thee i' the likeness of a fat old man;
> A ton of man is thy companion.
> Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humors,
> That bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of
> Dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed
> Cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox
> With the pudding in this belly, that reverend vice,
> That grey iniquity, that father ruffian,
> That vanity in years? Wherein is he good
> But to taste sack, and drink it? Wherein neat
> And cleanly, but to carve a capon, and eat it?"

The sack and sugar Falstaff admits readily; of addiction to the grosser pleasures of the table neither he nor his accuser says a word. Capon is light eating; and his neatness in carving gives an impression of delicacy in the observances of the board. He appears to have been fond of capon; for it figures in the tavern-bill found in his pockets as the only eatable beside the stimulant anchovy for supper, and the halfpenny-worth of bread.* Nor does his conversation ever turn upon gastro-

* This memorable tavern-bill runs thus:—

"Item, A capon	2*s.* 2*d.*
Item, Sauce	4*d.*
Item, Sack, two gallons	5*s.* 8*d.*
Item, Anchovies, and sack after supper . .	2*s.* 6*d.*
Item, Bread	*ob.*"

The contraction in the last item is that of *obulum*, the Roman halfpenny. It is a question whether a large share of the superfluity of wine, in this bill, might not have been consumed by the numerous hangers-on, liberally endowed with perpetual thirst, by whom Falstaff was accustomed to be surrounded.—M.

nomical topics. The bottle supplies an endless succession of jests; the dish scarcely contributes one.

We must observe that Falstaff is never represented as drunk, or even affected by wine. The copious potations of sack do not cloud his intellect, or embarrass his tongue. He is always self-possessed, and ready to pour forth his floods of acute wit. In this he forms a contrast to Sir Toby Belch. The discrimination between these two characters is very masterly. Both are knights, both convivial, both fond of loose or jocular society, both somewhat in advance of their youth — there are many outward points of similitude, and yet they are as distinct as Prospero and Polonius. The Illyrian knight is of a lower class of mind. His jests are mischievous; Falstaff never commits a practical joke. Sir Toby delights in brawling and tumult; Sir John prefers the ease of his own inn. Sir Toby sings songs, joins in catches, and rejoices in making a noise; Sir John knows too well his powers of wit and conversation to think it necessary to make any display, and he hates disturbance. Sir Toby is easily affected by liquor and roystering; Sir John rises from the board as cool as when he sate down. The knight of Illyria had nothing to cloud his mind; he never aspired to higher things than he has attained; he lives a jolly life in the household of his niece, feasting, drinking, singing, rioting, playing tricks from one end of the year to the other; his wishes are gratified, his hopes unblighted. I have endeavored to show that Falstaff was the contrary of all this. And we must remark that the tumultuous Toby has some dash of romance in him, of which no trace can be found in the English knight. The wit and grace, the good-humor and good looks of Maria conquer Toby's heart, and he is in love with her — love expressed in rough fashion, but love sincere. Could we see him some dozen years after his marriage, we should find him sobered down into a respectable, hospitable, and domestic country

gentleman, surrounded by a happy family of curly-headed Illyrians, and much fonder of his wife than of his bottle. We can never so consider of Falstaff; he must always be a dweller in clubs and taverns, a perpetual diner-out at gentlemen's parties, or a frequenter of haunts where he will not be disturbed by the presence of ladies of condition or character. In the "Merry Wives of Windsor"—I may remark, in passing, that the Falstaff of that play is a different conception from the Falstaff of Henry IV., and an inferior one—his love is of a very practical and unromantic nature. The ladies whom he addresses are beyond a certain age; and his passion is inspired by his hopes of making them his East and West Indies—by their tables and their purses. No; Falstaff never could have married—he was better "accommodated than with a wife." He might have paid his court to old Mistress Ursula, and sworn to marry her weekly from the time when he perceived the first white hair on his chin; but the oath was never kept, and we see what was the motive of his love, when we find him sending her a letter by his page after he has been refused credit by Master Dombledon, unless he can offer something better than the rather unmarketable security of himself and Bardolph.

We must also observe that he never laughs. Others laugh with him, or at him; but no laughter from him who occasions or permits it. He jests with a sad brow. The wit which he profusely scatters about is from the head, not the heart. Its satire is slight, and never malignant or affronting; but still it is satirical, and seldom joyous. It is anything but *fun*. Original genius and long practice have rendered it easy and familiar to him, and he uses it as a matter of business. He has too much philosophy to show that he feels himself misplaced; we discover his feelings by slight indications, which are, however, quite sufficient. I fear that this conception of the character could never be rendered popular on the stage; but I have heard

in private the part of Falstaff read with a perfectly grave, solemn, slow, deep, and sonorous voice, touched occasionally somewhat with the broken tone of age, from beginning to end, with admirable effect. But I can imagine him painted according to my idea. He is always caricatured. Not to refer to ordinary drawings, I remember one executed by the reverend and very clever author of the "Miseries of Human Life" (an engraving of which, if I do not mistake, used to hang in Ambrose's parlor in Edinburgh, in the actual room which was the primary seat of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ"), and the painter had exerted all his art in making the face seamed with the deep-drawn wrinkles and lines of a hard drinker and a constant laugher. Now, had jolly Bacchus

"Set the trace in his face that a toper will tell,"

should we not have it carefully noted by those who everlastingly joked upon his appearance? should we not have found his Malmsey nose, his whelks and bubukles, his exhalations and meteors, as duly described as those of Bardolph? A laughing countenance he certainly had not. Jests such as his are not, like Ralph's, "lost, unless you print the face." The leering wink in the eye introduced into this portraiture is also wrong, if intended to represent the habitual look of the man. The chief justice assures us that his eyes were moist like those of other men of his time of life; and, without his lordship's assurance, we may be certain that Falstaff seldom played tricks with them. He rises before me as an elderly and very corpulent gentleman, dressed like other military men of the time [of Elizabeth, observe, not Henry], yellow-cheeked, white-bearded, double-chinned, with a good-humored but grave expression of countenance, sensuality in the lower features of his face, high intellect in the upper.*

* In his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, Augustus William Schlegel gives the following opinion of the fat Knight:—"Falstaff is the

Such is the idea I have formed of Falstaff, and perhaps some may think I am right. It required no ordinary genius to carry such a character through so great a variety of incidents with so perfect a consistency. It is not a difficult thing to depict a man corroded by care within, yet appearing gay and at ease without, if you every moment pull the machinery to pieces, as chil-

crown of Shakespeare's comic invention. He has, without exhausting himself, continued this character throughout three plays, and exhibited him in every variety of situation; the figure is drawn so definitely and individually, that even to the mere reader it conveys the clear impression of personal acquaintance. Falstaff is the most agreeable and entertaining knave that ever was portrayed. His contemptible qualities are not disguised: old, lecherous, and dissolute; corpulent beyond measure, and always intent upon cherishing his body with eating, drinking, and sleeping; constantly in debt, and anything but conscientious in his choice of means by which money is to be raised; a cowardly soldier, and a lying braggart; a flatterer of his friends before their face, and a satirist behind their backs; and yet we are never disgusted with him. We see that his tender care of himself is without any mixture of malice toward others; he will only not be disturbed in the pleasant repose of his sensuality, and this he obtains through the activity of his understanding. Always on the alert, and good-humored, ever ready to crack jokes on others, and to enter into those of which he is himself the subject, so that he justly boasts he is not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others, he is an admirable companion for youthful idleness and levity. Under a helpless exterior, he conceals an extremely acute mind; he has always at command some dexterous turn whenever any of his free jokes begin to give displeasure; he is shrewd in his distinctions, between those whose favor he has to win and those over whom he may assume a familiar authority. He is so convinced that the part which he plays can only pass under the cloak of wit, that even when alone he is never altogether serious, but gives the drollest coloring to his love-intrigues, his intercourse with others, and to his own sensual philosophy. Witness his inimitable soliloquies on honor, on the influence of wine on bravery, his description of the beggarly vagabonds whom he enlisted, of Justice Shallow, &c. Falstaff has about him a whole court of amusing caricatures, who by turns make their appearance, without ever throwing him into the shade. The adventure in which the Prince, under the disguise of a robber, compels him to give up the spoil which he had just taken; the scene where the two act the part of the King and the Prince; Falstaff's behavior in the field, his mode of raising recruits, his patronage of Justice Shallow, which afterward takes such an unfortunate turn:—all this forms a series of characteristic scenes of the most original description, full of pleasantry, and replete with nice and ingenious observation, such as could only find a place in a historical play like the present."—M.

dren do their toys, to show what is inside. But the true art is to let the attendant circumstances bespeak the character, without being obliged to label him: "*Here you may see the tyrant;*" or, "*Here is the man heavy of heart, light of manner.*" Your ever-melancholy and ostentatiously broken-hearted heroes are felt to be bores, endurable only an account of the occasional beauty of the poetry in which they figure. We grow tired of "the gloom the fabled Hebrew wanderer wore," &c. and sympathize as little with perpetual lamentations over mental sufferings endured, or said to be endured, by active youth and manhood, as we should be with its ceaseless complaints of the physical pain of corns or toothache. The death-bed of Falstaff, told in the *patois* of Dame Quickly to her debauched and profligate auditory,* is a thousand times more pathetic to those who have looked upon the world with reflective eye, than all the morbid mournings of Childe Harold and his poetical progeny.

At the table of Shallow, laid in his arbor, Falstaff is compelled by the eager hospitality of his host to sit, much against his will. The wit of the court endures the tipsy garrulity of the prattling justice, the drunken harmonies of Silence, whose tongue is loosed by the sack to chant but-ends of old-fashioned ballads, the bustling awkwardness of Davy, and the long-known ale-house style of conversation of Bardolph, without uttering a word except some few phrases of common-place courtesy. He feels that he is in mind and thought far above his company. Was that the only company in which the same accident had befallen him? Certainly not; it had befallen him in many a mansion more honored than that of Shallow, and amid society loftier in name and prouder in place. His talent, and the use to which he had turned it, had as completely disjoined him in heart from those among whom he mixed, or might have mixed,

* *Vide* King Henry V., Act II., Scene 3.—M.

as it did from the pippin-and-caraway-eating party in Gloucestershire. The members of his court are about him, but not of him; they are all intended for use. From Shallow he borrows a thousand pounds; and, as the justice can not appreciate his wit, he wastes it not upon him, but uses other methods of ingratiating himself. Henry delights in his conversation and manner, and therefore all his fascinations are exerted to win the favor of one from whom so many advantages might be expected. He lives in the world alone and apart, so far as true community of thought with others is concerned; and his main business in life is to get through the day. That—the day—is his real enemy; he rises to fight it in the morning; he gets through its various dangers as well as he can; some difficulties he meets, some he avoids; he shuns those who ask him for money, seeks those from whom he may obtain it; lounges here, bustles there talks, drinks, jokes, schemes; and at last his foe is slain, when light and its troubles depart. "The day is gone—the night's our own." Courageously has he put an end to one of the three hundred and sixty-five tormentors which he has yearly to endure; and to-morrow—why—as was to day, so to-morrow shall be. At all events I shall not leave the sweet of the night unpicked, to think anything more about it. Bring me a cup of sack! Let us be merry! Does he ever think of what were his hopes and prospects at the time, when was

> "Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy,
> And page to Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk?"

Perhaps!——but he chases away the intrusive reflection by another cup of sack and a fresh sally of humor.

Dryden maintained that Shakespeare killed Mercutio, because, if he had not, Mercutio would have killed him. In spite of the authority of

> "All those prefaces of Dryden,
> For these our critics much confide in,"

glorious John is here mistaken. Mercutio is killed precisely in the part of the drama where his death is requisite. Not an incident, scarcely a sentence, in this most skilfully-managed play of Romeo and Juliet, can be omitted or misplaced. But I do think that Shakespeare was unwilling to hazard the reputation of Falstaff by producing him again in connection with his old companion, Hal, on the stage. The dancer in the epilogue of the Second Part of Henry IV. promises the audience, that "if you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katharine of France; where, for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already he be killed with your hard opinions." * The audience was not cloyed with fat meat, Sir John was not killed with their hard opinions; he was popular from the first hour of his appearance: but Shakespeare never kept his word. It was the dramatist, not the public, who killed his hero in the opening scenes of Henry V.; for he knew not how to interlace him with the story of Agincourt. There Henry was to be lord of all; and it was matter of necessity that his old master should disappear from the scene. He

* I consider this epilogue to be in blank-verse:—

"First my fear, then my courtesy, then my speech," &c.

but some slight alterations should be made; the transposition of a couple of words will make the passage here quoted metrical.

"One word more I beseech you. If you be not
Too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author
The story will continue with Sir John in't,
And make you merry with fair *Kate* of France. Where
(For anything I know) Falstaff shall die of
A sweat, unless already he be killed with
Your hard opinions; Oldcastle died a martyr,
And this is not the man.
My tongue is weary, when my legs are too,
I'll bid you good-night; and kneel down before you,
But indeed to pray for the queen."—W. M.

parted therefore even just between twelve and one, e'en at turning of the tide, and we never shall see him again until the waters of some Avon, here or elsewhere—it is a good Celtic name for rivers in general—shall once more bathe the limbs of the like of him who was laid for his last earthly sleep under a grave-stone bearing a disregarded inscription, on the north side of the chancel in the great church at Stratford.*

* Dr. Uirici, the German critic, in his work on "Shakespeare's Dramatic Art," commences his opinion of Falstaff by declaring that Shakespeare has evidently handled his character with a decided partiality, and has worked it out with more detail and care than he has bestowed upon any other of his dramatic creation. After repeating the old praise of Falstaff's wit and humor, with the drawback of "as great if not greater store of sensuality and love of enjoyment," Ulrici says that the character evidently borders on caricature without, however, over-stepping the boundary line of reality, and that "his individuality becomes, in short, the immediate expression of the comic view of life."—M.

NO. II.—JAQUES.

"As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him—'Ye,' said he, 'are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you burthened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your felicity, for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated. Surely the equity of Providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments.'

"With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life from a consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them."—RASSELAS, Chap. II.

THIS remark of Dr. Johnson on the consolation derived by his hero from the eloquence with which he gave vent to his complaints is perfectly just, but just only in such cases as those of Rasselas. The misery that can be expressed in flowing periods can not be of more importance than that experienced by the Abyssinian prince enclosed in the Happy Valley. His greatest calamity was no more than that he could not leave a place in which all the luxuries of life were at his command. but, as old Chremes says in the Heautontimorumenos,

"Miserum? quem minus credere 'st?
Quid reliqui 'st, quin habeat, quæ quidem in homine dicuntur bona?
Parentes, patriam incolumem, amicos, genu', cognatos, divitias:

Atque hæ perinde sunt ut illius animus qui ea possidet;
Qui uti scit, ei bona; illi, qui non utitur rectè, mala."*

On which, as

"Plain truth, dear Bentley,† needs no arts of speech,"

I can not do better than transcribe the commentary of Hickie, or some other grave expositor from whose pages he has transferred it to his own: "'Tis certain that the real enjoyment arising from external advantages depends wholly upon the situation of the mind of him who possesses them; for if he chance to labor under any secret anguish, this destroys all relish; or, if he know not how to use them for valuable purposes, they are so far from being of any service to him, that they often turn to real misfortunes." It is of no consequence that this profound reflection is nothing to the purpose in the place where it appears, because Chremes is not talking of any secret anguish, but of the use or abuse made of advantages according to the disposition of the individual to whom they have been accorded; and the anguish of Clinia was by no means secret. He feared the perpetual displeasure of his father, and knew not whether absence might not have diminished or alienated the affections of the lady on whose account he had abandoned home and country; but the general proposition of the sentence can not be denied. A "fatal remembrance"—to borrow a phrase from one of the most beautiful of Moore's melodies—may render a life, apparently abounding in pros-

* It may be thus attempted in something like the metre of the original, which the learned know by the sounding name of Tetrameter Iambic Acatalectic:—

"Does Clinia talk of misery? Believe his idle tale who can?
What hinders it that he should have whate'er is counted good for man—
His father's home, his native land, with wealth, and friends, and kith and kin?
But all these blessings will be prized according to the mind within:
Well used, the owner finds them good; if badly used, he deems them ill.
Cl. Nay, but his sire was always stern, and even now I fear him still," &c.
W. M.

† This paper first appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany* of June.—M.

perity, wretched and unhappy, as the vitiation of a single humor of the eye casts a sickly and unnatural hue over the gladsome meadow, or turns to a lurid light the brilliancy of the sunniest skies.

Rasselas and Jaques have no secret anguish to torment them, no real cares to disturb the even current of their tempers. To get rid of the prince first:—His sorrow is no more than that of the starling in the Sentimental Journey. He can not get out. He is discontented, because he has not the patience of Wordsworth's nuns, who fret not in their narrow cells; or of Wordsworth's muse, which murmurs not at being cribbed and confined to a sonnet. He wants the philosophy of that most admirable of all jail-ditties—and will not reflect that

> "Every island is a prison,
> Close surrounded by the sea;
> Kings and princes, for that reason,
> Prisoners are as well as we."

And as his calamity is, after all, very tolerable—as many a sore heart or a wearied mind, buffeting about amid the billows and breakers of the external world, would feel but too happy to exchange conditions with him in his safe haven of rest—it is no wonder that the weaving of the sonorous sentences of easily-soothed sorrow should be the extent of the mental afflictions of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.

Who or what Jaques was before he makes his appearance in the forest, Shakespeare does not inform us—any farther than that he had been a *roué* of considerable note, as the Duke tells him when he proposes to

> "Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
> If they will patiently receive my medicine.
> *Duke.* Fie on thee! I can tell what thou wouldst do.
> *Jaques.* What, for a counter, would I do but good?
> *Duke.* Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin;
> For thou thyself hast been a libertine

As sensual as the brutish sting itself;
And all the embossed sores and headed evils
That thou with license of free foot hast caught,
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world."

This, and that he was one of the three or four loving lords who put themselves into voluntary exile with the old Duke, leaving their lands and revenues to enrich the new one, who therefore gave them good leave to wander, is all we know about him, until he is formally announced to us as the melancholy Jaques. The very announcement is a tolerable proof that he is not soul-stricken in any material degree. When Rosalind tells him that he is considered to be a melancholy fellow, he is hard put to it to describe in what his melancholy consists. "I have," he says:—

"Neither the scholar's melancholy, which
Is emulation; nor the musician's, which is
Fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud;
Nor the soldier's,
Which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which
Is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice;
Nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is
A melancholy of mine own, compounded
Of many simples, extracted from many objects,
And indeed
The sundry contemplation of my travels,
In which my* often rumination wraps me
In a most humorous sadness."†

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* The old folio, by which Collier amended the text of his last edition of Shakespeare (republished by Redfield of New York), reads this line:—

"In which by often rumination robs me."

The monosyllable *my* is the reading of the second folio.—M.

† This is printed as prose, but assuredly it is blank verse. The alteration of a syllable or two, which in the corrupt state of the text of these plays is the slightest of all possible critical licenses, would make it run perfectly smooth. At all events, in the second line, "emulation" should be "emulative," to make it agree with the other clauses of the sentence. The courtier's melancholy is not *pride*, nor the soldier's *ambition*, &c. The adjective is used throughout—*fantastical, proud, ambitious, politic, nice*.—W. M.

He is nothing more than an idle gentleman given to musing, and making invectives against the affairs of the world, which are more remarkable for the poetry of their style and expression than the pungency of their satire. His famous description of the seven ages of man is that of a man who has seen but little to complain of in his career through life. The sorrows of his infant are of the slightest kind, and he notes that it is taken care of in a nurse's lap. The griefs of his schoolboy are confined to the necessity of going to school; and he, too, has had an anxious hand to attend to him. His shining morning face reflects the superintendence of one — probably a mother — interested in his welfare. The lover is tortured by no piercing pangs of love, his woes evaporating themselves musically in a ballad of his own composition, written not to his mistress, but fantastically addressed to her eyebrow. The soldier appears in all the pride and the swelling hopes of his spirit-stirring trade,

> "Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
> Seeking the bubble reputation
> Even in the cannon's mouth."

The fair round belly of the justice lined with good capon lets us know how he has passed his life. He is full of ease, magisterial authority, and squirely dignity. The lean and slippered pantaloon, and the dotard sunk into second childishness, have suffered only the common lot of humanity, without any of the calamities that embitter the unavoidable malady of old age.* All the characters in Jaques's sketch are well taken care of. The infant is nursed; the boy educated; the youth tormented with no greater cares than the necessity of hunting after rhymes to please the ear of a lady, whose love sits so lightly upon him as to set him upon nothing more serious than such a self-amusing task; the man in prime of life is engaged in gallant deeds, brave in action, anxious for character, and ambitious of fame;

* "Senectus ipsa est morbus."—Ter. Phorm. IV. i. 9.—W. M.

the man in declining years has won the due honors of his rank, he enjoys the luxuries of the table and dispenses the terrors of the bench; the man of age still more advanced is well to do in the world. If his shank be shrunk, it is not without hose and slipper—if his eyes be dim, they are spectacled—if his years have made him lean, they have gathered for him wherewithal to fatten the pouch by his side. And when this strange eventful history is closed by the penalties paid by men who live too long, Jaques does not tell us that the helpless being,

> "Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything,"

is left unprotected in his helplessness.

Such pictures of life do not proceed from a man very heavy at heart. Nor can it be without design that they are introduced into this especial place. The moment before, the famished Orlando has burst in upon the sylvan meal of the Duke, brandishing a naked sword, demanding with furious threat food for himself and his helpless companion,

> "Oppressed with two weak evils, age and hunger."

The Duke, struck with his earnest appeal, can not refrain from comparing the real suffering which he witnesses in Orlando with that which is endured by himself and his co-mates, and partners in exile. Addressing Jaques, he says:—

> "Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy:
> This wide and universal theatre
> Presents more woful pageants than the scene
> Wherein we play in."*

But the spectacle and the comment upon it lightly touch Jaques, and he starts off at once into a witty and poetic comparison of the real drama of the world with the mimic drama of the stage, in which, with the sight of well-nurtured youth driven to the

* Query *on?* "Where*in* we play *in*" is tautological. "Wherein we play *on*," *i. e.* "continue to play."—W. M.

savage desperation of periling his own life, and assailing that of others—and of weakly old age lying down in the feeble but equally resolved desperation of dying by the wayside, driven to this extremity by sore fatigue and hunger—he diverts himself and his audience, whether in the forest or theatre, on the stage or in the closet, with graphic descriptions of human life; not one of them, proceeding as they do from the lips of the *melancholy* Jaques, presenting a single point on which true melancholy can dwell. Mourning over what can not be avoided must be in its essence common-place: and nothing has been added to the lamentations over the ills brought by the flight of years since Moses, the man of God,* declared the concluding period of protracted life to be a period of labor and sorrow; since Solomon, or whoever else writes under the name of the Preacher, in a passage which, whether it is inspired or not, is a passage of exquisite beauty, warned us to provide in youth, "while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burthen, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern;" or, to make a

* Psalm xc. "A prayer of Moses, the man of God," v. 10.—W. M.

shorter quotation, since Homer summed up all these ills by applying to old age the epithet of λυγρος—a word which can not be translated, but the force of which must be felt. Abate these unavoidable misfortunes, and the catalogue of Jaques is that of happy conditions. In his visions there is no trace of the child doomed to wretchedness before its very birth; no hint that such a thing could occur as its being made an object of calculation, one part medical, three parts financial, to the starveling surgeon, whether by the floating of the lungs, or other test equally fallacious and fee-producing, the miserable mother may be convicted of doing that which, before she had attempted, all that is her soul of woman must have been torn from its uttermost roots, when in an agony of shame and dread the child that was to have made her forget her labor was committed to the cesspool. No hint that the days of infancy should be devoted to the damnation of a factory, or to the tender mercies of a parish beadle. No hint that philosophy should come forward armed with the panoply offensive and defensive of logic and eloquence, to prove that the inversion of all natural relations was just and wise—that the toil of childhood was due to the support of manhood—that those hours, the very labors of which even the etymologists give to recreation, should be devoted to those wretched drudgeries which seem to split the heart of all but those who derive from them blood-stained money, or blood-bedabbled applause. Jaques sees not Greensmith squeezing his children by the throat until they die.* He hears not the supplication of the hapless boy begging his still more hapless father for a moment's respite, ere the fatal handkerchief is twisted round his throat by the hand of him to whom he owed his being. Jaques thinks not of the baby deserted on the step

* A melancholy case, which made some sensation in London, in 1837. An unhappy man named Greensmith, unable to obtain "daily food for daily toil," too proud to beg, and too virtuous to steal, killed his own children and himself, in the utter hopelessness and distraction of want.—M.

of the inhospitable door, of the shame of the mother, of the disgrace of the parents, of the misery of the forsaken infant. His boy is at school, his soldier in the breach, his elder on the justice-seat. Are these the woes of life? Is there no neglected creature left to himself or to the worse nurture of others, whose trade it is to corrupt — who will teach him what was taught to swaggering Jack Chance, found on Newgate steps, and educated at the venerable seminary of St. Giles's Pound, where

> "They taught him to drink, and to thieve, and fight,
> And everything else but to read and write."

Is there no stripling short of commons, but abundant in the supply of the strap or the cudgel? — no man fighting through the world in fortuneless struggles, and occupied by cares or oppressed by wants more stringent than those of love? — or in love itself does the current of that bitter passion never run less smooth than when sonnets to a lady's eyebrow are the prime objects of solicitude? — or may not even he who began with such sonneteering have found something more serious and sad, something more heart-throbbing and soul-rending, in the progress of his passion? Is the soldier melancholy in the storm and whirlwind of war? Is the gallant confronting of the cannon a matter to be complained of? The dolorous flight, the trampled battalion, the broken squadron, the lost battle, the lingering wound, the ill-furnished hospital, the unfed blockade, hunger and thirst, and pain, and fatigue, and mutilation, and cold, and rout, and scorn, and slight — services neglected, unworthy claims preferred, life wasted, or honor tarnished — are all passed by! In peaceful life we have no deeper misfortune placed before us than that it is not unusual that a justice of peace may be prosy in remark and trite in illustration. Are there no other evils to assail us through the agony of life? And when the conclusion comes, how far less tragic is the portraiture of mental imbecility,

if considered as a state of misery than as one of comparative happiness, as escaping a still worse lot! Crabbe is sadder far than Jaques, when, after his appalling description of the inmates of a workhouse*—(what would Crabbe have written *now?*)—he winds up by showing to us amid its victims two persons as being

> "*happier* far than they,
> The moping idiot, and the madman gay."

If what he here sums up as the result of his life's observations on mankind be all that calls forth the melancholy of the witty and eloquent speaker he had not much to complain of. Mr. Shandy lamenting in sweetly-modulated periods, because his son has been christened Tristram instead of Trismegistus, is as much an object of condolence. Jaques has just seen the aspect of famine, and heard the words of despair; the Duke has pointed out to him the consideration that more woful and practical calamities exist than even the exile of princes and the downfall of lords; and he breaks off into a light strain of satire, fit only for jesting comedy. Trim might have rebuked him as he rebuked the prostrate Mr. Shandy, by reminding him that there are other things to make us melancholy in the world: and nobody knew it better, or could say it better, than he in whose brain was minted the hysteric passion of Lear choked by his button—the farewell of victorious Othello to all the pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war—the tears of Richard over the submission of roan Barbary to Bolingbroke—the demand of Romeo that the Mantuan druggist should supply him with such soon-speeding gear that will rid him of hated life

> "As violently as hasty powder fired
> Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb"—

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* Viewing the New Poor Law as a *political* question, Dr. Maginn constantly and powerfully denounced it as inhuman—inasmuch as it put the poor upon "starvation diet," and separated man and wife, when once admitted into the workhouse.—M.

the desolation of Antony — the mourning of Henry over sire slain by son, and son by sire — or the despair of Macbeth. I say nothing of the griefs of Constance, or Isabel, or Desdemona, or Juliet, or Ophelia, because in the sketches of Jaques he passes by all allusion to women; a fact which of itself is sufficient to prove that his melancholy was but in play — was nothing more than what Arthur remembered when he was in France, where

> "Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
> Only for wantonness."

Shakespeare well knew that there is no true pathetic, nothing that can permanently lacerate the heart, and embitter the speech, unless a woman be concerned. It is the legacy left us by Eve. The tenor of man's woe, says Milton, with a most ungallant and grisly pun, is still from *wo*-man to begin; and he who will give himself a few moments to reflect will find that the stern trigamist is right. On this, however, I shall not dilate. I may perhaps have something to say, as we go on, of the ladies of Shakespeare. For the present purpose, it is enough to remark with Trim, that there are many real griefs to make a man lie down and cry, without troubling ourselves with those which are put forward by the poetic mourner in the forest of Arden.

Different indeed is the sight set before the eyes of Adam in the great poem just referred to, when he is told to look upon the miseries which the fall of man has entailed upon his descendants. Far other than the scenes that flit across this melancholy man by profession are those evoked by Michael in the visionary lazar-house. It would be ill-befitting, indeed, that the merry note of the sweet bird warbling freely in the glade should be marred by discordant sounds of woe, cataloguing the dreary list of disease,

> "All maladies
> Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms

Of heartsick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums;"

while, amid the dire tossing and deep groans of the sufferers,

"——— Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike."

And equally ill-befitting would be any serious allusion to those passions and feelings which in their violence or their anguish render the human bosom a lazar-house filled with maladies of the mind as racking and as wasting as those of the body, and call forth a supplication for the releasing blow of Death as the final hope, with an earnestness as desperate, and cry as loud as ever arose from the tenement, sad, noisome, and dark, which holds the joint-racked victims of physical disease. Such themes should not sadden the festive banquet in the forest. The Duke and his co-mates and partners in exile, reconciled to their present mode of life ["I would not change it," says Amiens, speaking, we may suppose, the sentiments of all], and successful in having plucked the precious jewel, Content, from the head of ugly and venomous Adversity, are ready to bestow their woodland fare upon real suffering, but in no mood to listen to the heart-rending descriptions of sorrows graver than those which form a theme for the discourses which Jaques in mimic melancholy contributes to their amusement.*

* Dr. Ulrici says, "The melancholy Jaques is not drawn as a fool by profession; he appears merely as a comic, foolish character; but his profound superficiality, his witty sentimentality, his merry sadness, have struck root so deeply in his inmost being, that it shows throughout but the one stamp of folly and perversity. All these contrasts are in fact found in his character; his profoundness is really profound, but at the same time, when held up to the light, very superficial; his soft, tender sensitiveness is, however, full of

Shakespeare designed him to be a maker of fine sentences — a dresser forth in sweet language of the ordinary common-places or the common-place mishaps of mankind, and he takes care to show us that he did not intend him for anything beside. With what admirable art he is confronted with Touchstone. He enters merrily laughing at the pointless philosophizing of the fool in the forest. His lungs crow like chanticleer when he hears him moralizing over his dial, and making the deep discovery that ten o'clock has succeeded nine, and will be followed by eleven. When Touchstone himself appears, we do not find in his own discourse any touches of such deep contemplation. He is shrewd, sharp, worldly, witty, keen, gibing, observant. It is plain that he has been mocking Jaques; and, as is usual, the mocked thinks himself the mocker. If one has moralized the spectacle of a wounded deer into a thousand similes, comparing his weeping into the stream to the conduct of worldlings in giving in their testaments the sum of more to that which had too much — his abandonment, to the parting of the flux of companions from misery — the sweeping by of the careless herd full of the pasture, to the desertion of the poor and broken bankrupt by the fat and greasy citizens — and so forth; if such have been the common-places of Jaques, are they not fitly matched by the common-places of Touchstone upon his watch? It is as high a stretch of fancy that brings the reflection how

sharp hooks and edges, and his melancholy, in fact, is in the highest degree merry and sportive. While all the other characters seem to regard life as a gay toy and merry pomp, he, with similar one-sidedness, takes it for a sombre funeral train, in which every mourner, weeping and waiting, is advancing to his own grave. The gay and festive play of the others bears, however, in itself, and eventually passes over into, a deep seriousness; so in like manner, in this case, the dull melancholy funeral train changes insensibly and involuntarily into a procession of fools." In Ulrici's opinion, Jaques is drawn in opposition to, and for the purpose of more fully developing, the character of "the merry fool, Touchstone," described as "the genuine English clown — the fool with the jingling cap-and-bells, who is and professes to be a fool, and to make sport of himself and all the rest of the world."—M.

> "—— from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
> And then from hour to hour we rot and rot,
> And thereby hangs a tale,"

which is scoffed at by Jaques, as that which dictates his own moralizings on the death of the deer. The motley fool is as wise as the melancholy lord whom he is parodying. The shepherd Corin, who replies to the courtly quizzing of Touchstone by such apophthegms as that "it is the property of rain to wet, and of fire to burn," is unconsciously performing the same part to the clown, as *he* had been designedly performing to Jaques. Witty nonsense is answered by dull nonsense, as the emptiness of poetry had been answered by the emptiness of prose. There was nothing sincere in the lamentation over the wounded stag. It was only used as a peg on which to hang fine conceits. Had Falstaff seen the deer, his imagination would have called up visions of haunches and pastries, preluding an everlasting series of cups of sack among the revel riot of boon companions, and he would have instantly ordered its throat to be cut. If it had fallen in the way of Friar Lawrence, the mild-hearted man of herbs would have endeavored to extract the arrow, heal the wound, and let the hart ungalled go free. Neither would have thought the hairy fool a subject for reflections, which neither relieved the wants of man nor the pains of beast. Jaques complains of the injustice and cruelty of killing deer, but unscrupulously sits down to dine upon venison, and sorrows over the suffering of the native burghers of the forest city, without doing anything farther than amusing himself with rhetorical flourishes drawn from the contemplation of the pain which he witnesses with professional coolness and unconcern.*

* Mr. Hazlitt, in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, says, "Jaques is the only purely contemplative character in Shakespeare. He thinks, and does nothing. His whole occupation is to amuse his mind, and he is wholly regardless of his body and his fortunes. He is the prince of philosophical idlers; his only passion is thought; he sets no value upon anything, but as

It is evident, in short, that the happiest days of his life are those which he is spending in the forest. His raking days are over, and he is tired of city dissipation. He has shaken hands with the world, finding, with Cowley, that "he and it would never agree." To use an expression somewhat vulgar, he has had his fun for his money; and he thinks the bargain so fair and conclusive on both sides, that he has no notion of opening another. His mind is relieved of a thousand anxieties which beset him in the court, and he breathes freely in the forest. The iron has not entered into his soul; nothing has occurred to chase sleep from his eyelids; and his fantastic reflections are, as he himself takes care to tell us, but general observations on the ordinary and outward manners and feelings of mankind — a species of taxing which

> "—— like a wild-goose flies,
> Unclaimed of any man."

Above all, in having abandoned station, and wealth, and country, to join the faithful few who have in evil report clung manfully to their prince, he knows that he has played a noble and an honorable part; and they to whose lot it may have fallen to experience the happiness of having done a generous, disinterested, or self-denying action — or sacrificed temporary interests to undying principle — or shown to the world without, that what are thought to be its great advantages can be flung aside, or laid aside, when they come in collision with the feelings and passions of the world within — will be perfectly sure that Jaques, reft of land, and banished from court, felt himself exalted in his own eyes, and therefore easy of mind, whether he was

it serves as food for reflection. He can 'suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs;' the motley fool 'who morals on the time,' is the greatest prize he meets in the forest. He resents Orlando's passion for Rosalind as some disparagement of his own passion for abstract truth; and leaves the Duke, as soon as he is restored to his sovereignty, to seek his brother out, who has quitted it, and turned hermit."—M.

mourning in melodious blank verse, or weaving jocular parodies on the canzonets of the good-humored Amiens.

He was happy "under the greenwood tree." Addison I believe it is who says, that all mankind have an instinctive love of country and woodland scenery, and he traces it to a sort of dim recollection imprinted upon us of our original haunt, the garden of Eden. It is at all events certain, that, from the days when the cedars of Lebanon supplied images to the great poets of Jerusalem, to that in which the tall tree haunted Wordsworth "as a passion," the forest has caught a strong hold of the poetic mind. It is with reluctance that I refrain from quoting; but the passages of surpassing beauty which crowd upon me from all times and languages are too numerous. I know not which to exclude, and I have not room for all; let me then take a bit of prose from one who never indulged in poetry, and I think I shall make it a case in point. In a little book called "Statistical Sketches of Upper Canada, for the use of Emigrants, by a Backwoodsman," now lying before me, the author, after describing the field-sports in Canada with a precision and a *goût* to be derived only from practice and zeal, concludes a chapter, most appropriately introduced by a motto from the Lady of the Lake,

> "'Tis merry, 'tis merry in good greenwood,
> When the mavis and merle are singing,
> When the deer sweep by, and the hounds are in cry,
> And the hunter's horn is ringing,"

by saying:—

"It is only since writing the above that I fell in with the first volume of Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and I can not describe the pleasure I received from reading his vivid, spirited, and accurate description of the feelings he experienced on first taking on him the life of a hunter. At an earlier period of life than Lord Edward had then attained, I made my debut

in the forest, and first assumed the blanket-cloak and the rifle, the moccasin and the snow-shoe; and the ecstatic feeling of Arab-like independence, and the utter contempt for the advantage and restrictions of civilization, which he describes, I then felt in its fullest power. And even now, when my way of life, like Macbeth's, is falling 'into the sere, the yellow leaf,' and when a tropical climate, privation, disease, and thankless toil, are combining with advancing years to unstring a frame the strength of which once set hunger, cold, and fatigue at defiance, and to undermine a constitution that once appeared iron-bound, still I can not lie down by a fire in the woods without the elevating feeling which I experienced formerly returning, though in a diminished degree. This must be human nature; for it is an undoubted fact, that no man who associates with and follows the pursuits of the Indian, for any length of time, ever voluntarily returns to civilized society.

"What a companion in the woods Lord Edward must have been! and how shocking to think that, with talents which would have made him at once the idol and the ornament of his profession, and affections which must have rendered him an object of adoration in all the relations of private life — with honor, with courage, with generosity, with every trait that can at once ennoble and endear — he should never have been taught that there is a higher principle of action than the mere impulse of the passions — that he should never have learned, before plunging his country into blood and disorder, to have weighed the means he possessed with the end he proposed, or the problematical good with the certain evil! — that he should have had Tom Paine for a tutor in religion and politics, and Tom Moore for a biographer, to hold up as a pattern, instead of warning, the errors and misfortunes of a being so noble — to subserve the revolutionary purposes of a faction, who, like Samson, are

pulling down a fabric which will bury both them and their enemies under it."

Never mind the aberrations of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the religion or the politics of Tom Paine, or the biography of Tom Moore. On all these matters I may hold my own opinions, but they are not wanted now; but have we not here the feelings of Jaques? Here are the gloomy expressions of general sorrow over climate, privation, disease, thankless toil, advancing years, unstrung frame. But here also we have ecstatic emotions of Arab-like independence, generous reflections upon political adversaries, and high-minded adherence to the views and principles which in his honor and conscience he believed to be in all circumstances inflexibly right, coming from the heart of a forest, The Backwoodsman is Dunlop;* and is he, in spite of this sad-sounding passage, melancholy? Not he, in good sooth. The very next page to that which I have quoted is a description of the pleasant mode of travelling in Canada, before the march of improvement had made it comfortable and convenient.†

* Dr. Dunlop, commonly called "Tiger Dunlop," by the wits of *Blackwood*, from some extraordinary stories he told of his tiger-hunts in the East Indies, eventually settled in Canada, where he became a member of the Provincial Parliament, and died a few years ago.—M.

† "Formerly, that is to say, previous to the peace of 1815, a journey between Quebec and Sandwich was an undertaking considerably more tedious and troublesome than the voyage from London to Quebec. In the first place, the commissariat of the expedition had to be cared for; and to that end every gentleman who was liable to travel had, as a part of his appointments, a provision basket, which held generally a cold round of beef, tin plates and drinking-cups, tea, sugar, biscuits, and about a gallon of brandy. These, with your wardrobe and a camp-bed, were stowed away in a batteau, or flat-bottomed boat; and off you set with a crew of seven stout, light-hearted, jolly, lively Canadians, who sung their boat-songs all the time they could spare from smoking their pipes. You were accompanied by a fleet of similar boats, called a brigade, the crews of which assisted each other up the rapids, and at night put into some creek, bay, or uninhabited island, where fires were lighted, tents made of the sails, and the song, the laugh, and the shout, were heard, with little intermission, all the night through; and if you had the felicity to have among the party a fifer or a fiddler, the dance was sometimes kept up

Jaques was just as woe-begone as the Tyger, and no more. I remember when he — Dunlop I mean, not Jaques — used to laugh at the phrenologists of Edinburgh for saying, after a careful admeasurement, that his skull in all points was exactly that of Shakespeare — I suppose he will be equally inclined to laugh when he finds who is the double an old companion has selected for him. But no matter. His melancholy passes away not more rapidly than that of Jaques; and I venture to say that the latter, if he were existing in flesh and blood, would have no scruple in joining the doctor this moment over the bowl of punch which I am sure he is brewing, has brewed, or is about to brew, on the banks of Huron or Ontario.

Whether he would or not, he departs from the stage with the grace and easy elegance of a gentleman in heart and manners. He joins his old antagonist the usurping Duke in his fallen fortunes; he had spurned him in his prosperity: his restored friend he bequeaths to his former honor, deserved by his patience and his virtue — he compliments Oliver on his restoration to his land, and love, and great allies — wishes Silvius joy of his long-sought and well-earned marriage — cracks upon Touchstone one of those good-humored jests to which men of the world on the eve of marriage must laughingly submit — and makes his bow.

all night — for, if a Frenchman has a fiddle, sleep ceases to be a necessary of life with him. This mode of travelling was far from being unpleasant, for there was something of romance and adventure in it; and the scenes you witnessed, both by night and day, were picturesque in the highest degree. But it was tedious; for you were in great luck if you arrived at your journey's end in a month; and if the weather were boisterous, or the wind a-head, you might be an indefinite time longer.

"But your march of improvement is a sore destroyer of the romantic and picturesque. A gentleman about to take such a journey now-a-days, orders his servant to pack his portmanteau, and put it on board the John Molson, or any of his family; and at the stated hour he marches on board, the bell rings, the engine is put in motion, and away you go smoking, and splashing, and walloping along, at the rate of ten knots an hour, in the ugliest species of craft that ever disfigured a marine landscape."

Some sage critics have discovered as a great geographical fault in Shakespeare, that he introduces the tropical lion and serpent into Arden, which, it appears, they have ascertained to lie in some temperate zone. I wish them joy of their sagacity. Monsters more wonderful are to found in that forest; for never yet, since water ran and tall trees bloomed, were there gathered together such a company as those who compose the *dramatis personæ* of "As You Like it." All the prodigies spawned by Africa, "*leonum arida nutrix*," might well have teemed in a forest, wherever situate, that was inhabited by such creatures as Rosalind, Touchstone, and Jaques.

*** As to the question which opened these Papers — why, I must leave it to the jury. Is the jesting, revelling, rioting Falstaff, broken of fortunes, luckless in life, sunk in habits, buffeting with the discreditable part of the world, or the melancholy, mourning, complaining Jaques, honorable of conduct, high in moral position, fearless of the future, and lying in the forest away from trouble — which of them, I say, feels more the load of care? I think Shakespeare well knew, and depicted them accordingly.* But I must leave it to my readers, *si qui sunt.*

* It may be noticed how generally the critics, analyzing the character of Falstaff, present it only as that of a merely witty debauchee, without even the manly attribute of courage. In a paper upon Falstaff, as a type of epicurian life, in "Lectures and Essays, by the Rev. Henry Giles," a somewhat loftier view is taken. He says: "The gross idea of Falstaff is that of a coward, a liar, a glutton and a buffoon. This idea is so partial, that when taken for the whole character it is untrue. Much more than this there must be, in one among the greatest of Shakespeare's creations. In the cowardice of Falstaff there is much inconsistency; and much of this, we may suppose, arises from the exaggerations in which the poet has knowingly indulged for the sake of ludicrous position. I do not know otherwise how to interpret the affair at Gad's Hill. The prince, whether as Shakespeare or history represents him, was no lover of dastards; yet the poet allows him to intrust Falstaff with a company; and Falstaff himself, as he gives him to us after the battle of Shrewsbury, says, 'I have led my raggamuffins where they are peppered; there's but three of my hundred and fifty left alive.' Falstaff

willingly goes twice to the wars; and the cool mockery of which he was capable on the field, shows a light heart, and not a timid one. The gayety, the ease, the merriment, the reckless frolic, the immovable self-possession which he exhibits, preceding the campaign and in it, evinces any other temper than that of cowardice. A coward may have daring in the midst of danger, but he has never levity in it — spontaneous, unaffected levity. Falstaff, physically, was not a craven. He was assuredly attached to life, and to the life of the *senses*. It was all he had; it was all he hoped; and it was all he wished. He was therefore in no anxiety to lose it; and his philosophy taught him of nothing which was a compensation for endangering it."—Again, he says, "If the name of buffoon can be applied to Falstaff, then it is a designation not inconsistent with the richest prodigality of talents. Falstaff companioned with the highest in the land, not only on the ground of his genius, but of his rank. That Falstaff was not unmindful of his genius, appears everywhere in the spirit of a confident egotism, which never strikes us as puerile or foolish, and he constantly shows the same fact in direct expression. Subscribing a very characteristic letter to the prince, he shows that he was equally confident of his rank, when he writes, 'Jack Falstaff, with my familiars; John, with my brothers and sisters; and *Sir John*, with the rest of Europe.' Indeed there is in this signature, consciousness of fame as well as pride of station; and both are distinctive of the man. He was jealous of his position, and next to this, he was jealous of his abilities. While, upon occasions, he seems to abase himself, his self-abasement has always along with it more than an equivalent in self-elation."—Further on (and this embodies an idea much akin to Maginn's) it is said, by Mr. Giles, "In Falstaff, we have the entireness of being concentrated in the palpable. The present, and the personal, and the physical, make to him the sum of existence. What *is*, what is *mine*, what can be touched, and tasted, and felt, and heard, and seen — this on the Falstaff side of life constitutes the universe. Here are no dreams or doubts; here are no mysteries or spectres; here are no hesitancies or perplexities; here are no problems or conjectures; here is no sadness from fancy, and no malady from visions; here is no questioning of the future, and no musing on the grave. *And yet, underlying the whole, there is a basis of melancholy, which any one who will go deep enough below the surface can not fail to reach.*" Truly does Mr. Giles add, "There is no life so melancholy in its close, as that of a licentious wit." The whole paper is worth careful perusal, as an analytic view of a very peculiar creation on the part of Shakespeare.—M.

No. III.—ROMEO.

"Of this unlucky sort our Romeus is one,
For all his hap turns to mishap, and all his mirth to mone."
The Tragicall Hystorye of Romeus and Juliet.

"NEVER," says Prince Escalus, in the concluding distich of Romeo and Juliet,

'— was there story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.'"

It is a story which, in the artificial shape of a black-letter ballad, powerfully affected the imagination, and awakened the sensibilities, of our ancestors, and in the hands of Shakespeare has become *the* love-story of the whole world.* Who cares for

* Long before Shakespeare wrote "Romeo and Juliet," there was an English play upon the subject. The Veronese, who believe the story to be historically true, fix its date as 1303. Nearly two centuries later, Massaccio, a Neapolitan, gave embodiment to the story in a romance or fiction, changing the scene to Sienna, and varying the catastrophe. Other Italian authors also took up the story, and, from these various sources, a French novel was composed by Pierre Boisteau, of which a translation was published, in 1567, by William Paynter, an English writer, in his "Palace of Pleasure." But Arthur Brooke had anticipated Paynter, partly using the French novel, partly taking the story as related by Bandello, the Italian, in 1554. Brooke published a poem called "The Tragicall Hystorye of Romeus and Juliet," in 1562, and intimates, in his preface, that the subject had already been "set forth on the stage." Lope de Vega, in Spain, and Luigi Groto, in Italy, had also dramatized it. Mr. Verplanck says that to Brooke's poem "Shakespeare owed the outline, at least, of every character, except Mercutio [what an exception! sufficient to have made a reputation as brilliant as Sheridan's, for an ordinary dramatist]. He owes, too, the story, and many hints worked

the loves of Petrarch and Laura, or Eloisa and Abelard, compared with those of Romeo and Juliet? The gallantries of Petrarch are conveyed in models of polished and ornate verse; but, in spite of their elegance, we feel that they are frosty as the Alps beneath which they were written. They are only the exercises of genius, not the ebullitions of feeling; and we can easily credit the story that Petrarch refused a dispensation to marry Laura, lest marriage might spoil his poetry. The muse, and not the lady, was his mistress. In the case of Abelard there are many associations which are not agreeable; and, after all, we can hardly help looking upon him as a fitter hero for Bayle's Dictionary than a romance. In Romeo and Juliet we have the poetry of Petrarch without its iciness, and the passion of Eloisa free from its coarse exhibition.* We have, too, philosophy far more profound than ever was scattered over the syllogistic pages of Abelard, full of knowledge and acuteness as they undoubtedly are.

But I am not about to consider Romeo merely as a lover, or to use him as an illustration of Lysander's often-quoted line,

up in his dialogue." In his illustrative notes on "Romeo and Juliet," Mr. Verplanck gives several proofs of this indebtedness, and says, "he used what was best, and improved it."—M.

* "The incidents in 'Romeo and Juliet' are rapid, various, unintermitting in interest, sufficiently probable, and tending to the catastrophe. . . . . No play of Shakespeare is more frequently represented, or honored with more tears. . . . . Madame de Staël has truly remarked, that in 'Romeo and Juliet' we have more than in any other tragedy, the mere passion of love; love in all its vernal promise, full of hope and innocence, ardent beyond all restraint of reason, but tender as it is warm. The contrast between this impetuosity of delicious joy, in which the youthful lovers are first displayed, and the horrors of the last scene, throws a charm of deep melancholy over the whole. Once alone, each of them, in these earlier moments, is touched by a presaging fear; it passes quickly away from them, but is not lost on the reader."—Hallam.

"Read 'Romeo and Juliet:' all is youth and spring—youth with its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies; spring with its odors, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play."—Coleridge.

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

In that course the current has been as rough to others as to Romeo; who, in spite of all his misfortunes, has wooed and won the lady of his affections. That Lysander's line is often true, can not be questioned; though it is no more than the exaggeration of an annoyed suitor to say that love has *never* run smoothly. The reason why it should be so generally true, is given in "Peveril of the Peak" by Sir Walter Scott; a man who closely approached to the genius of Shakespeare in depicting character, and who, above all writers of imagination, most nearly resembled him in the possession of keen, shrewd, every-day common-sense, rendered more remarkable by the contrast of the romantic, pathetic, and picturesque, by which it is in all directions surrounded.

"This celebrated passage:—

['Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,' &c.]

which we have prefixed to this chapter [chap. xii., vol. i., Peveril of the Peak], has, like most observations of the same author, its foundation in real experience. The period at which love is felt most strongly is seldom that at which there is much prospect of its being brought to a happy issue. In fine, there are few men who do not look back in secret to some period of their youth at which a sincere and early affection was repulsed or betrayed, or became abortive under opposing circumstances. It is these little passages of secret history, which leave a tinge of romance in every bosom, scarce permitting us, even in the most busy or the most advanced period of life, to listen with total indifference to a tale of true love."*

* Was Sir Walter thinking of his own case when he wrote this passage? See his Life, by Lockhart, vol. i., p. 242. His family used to call Sir Walter *Old Peveril*, from some fancied resemblance of the character.—W. M. [It was in the Parliament House (the law-courts) of Edinburgh, that the *sobriquet* of "Old Peveril" originated, and was principally kept up. Lockhart

These remarks, the justice of which can not be questioned, scarcely apply to the case of Romeo. In no respect, save that the families were at variance, was the match between him and Juliet such as not to afford a prospect of happy issue; and everything indicated the possibility of making their marriage a ground of reconciliation between their respective houses. Both are tired of the quarrel. Lady Capulet and Lady Montague are introduced to the very first scene of the play, endeavoring to pacify their husbands; and, when the brawl is over, Paris laments to Juliet's father that it is a pity persons of such honorable reckoning should have lived so long at variance. For Romeo himself old Capulet expresses the highest respect, as being one of the ornaments of the city; and, after the death of Juliet, old Montague, touched by her truth and constancy, proposes to raise to her a statue of gold. With such sentiments and predispositions, the early passion of the Veronese lovers does not come within the canon of Sir Walter Scott; and, as I have said, I do not think that Romeo is designed merely as an exhibition of a man unfortunate in love.*

I consider him to be meant as the character of an *unlucky* man — a man who, with the best views and fairest intentions, is perpetually so unfortunate as to fail in every aspiration, and,

relates that soon after the novel appeared, Patrick Robertson (then an eminent advocate, and afterward a Judge), seeing the tall conical white head of Scott advancing toward a crowd of the briefless who were congregated around the stove in the Outer Hall, exclaimed, "Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril — I see the *Peak*." Lockhart adds that "the application stuck; to his dying day, Scott was in the Outer House *Peveril of the Peak*, or *Old Peveril*, and by-and-by, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*."—M.

* Hazlitt, who says of this play that "there is the buoyant spirit of youth in every line, in the rapturous intoxication of hope, and in the bitterness of despair," declares the lovers' courtship to be "Shakespeare all over, and Shakespeare when he was young." In another place he gives it as his opinion that "Romeo is Hamlet in love."—M.

while exerting himself to the utmost in their behalf, to involve all whom he holds dearest in misery and ruin. At the commencement of the play an idle quarrel among some low retainers of the rival families produces a general riot, with which he has nothing to do. He is not present from beginning to end; the tumult has been so sudden and unexpected, that his father is obliged to ask

> "What set this ancient quarrel new abroach?"

And yet it is this very quarrel which lays him prostrate in death by his own hand, outside Capulet's monument, before the tragedy concludes. While the fray was going on, he was nursing love-fancies, and endeavoring to persuade himself that his heart was breaking for Rosaline. How afflicting his passions must have been, we see by the conundrums he makes upon it:—

> "Love is a smoke raised * with the fume of sighs;
> Being purged,† a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
> Being vexed, a sea nourished with lovers' tears.‡
> What is it else?—a madness most discreet,
> A choking gall, and a preserving sweet."—

And so forth. The sorrows which we can balance in such trim antitheses do not lie very deep. The time is rapidly advancing when his sentences will be less sounding.

> "It is my lady; oh, it is my love!
> O that she knew she were!"—

speaks more touchingly the state of his engrossed soul than all the fine metaphors ever vented. The supercilious Spartans in

* The word is *raised*, in the quarto of 1597, but *made* in other editions.—M.

† In Collier's Shakespeare (Redfield, New York), which is corrected by the MSS. emendations in his copy of the second folio edition of 1632, this line reads—

> "Being puff'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes,"

which alteration is consonant with common sense, and makes the passage intelligible.—M.

‡ Is there not a line missing?—W. M. [In Collier's corrected folio of 1632, the missing line (if any), is not supplied.—M.]

the days of their success prided themselves upon the laconic brevity of their despatches to states in hostility or alliance with them. When they were sinking before the Macedonians, another style was adopted; and Philip observed that he had taught them to lengthen their monosyllables. Real love has had a contrary effect upon Romeo. It has abridged his swelling passages, and brought him to the language of prose. The reason of the alteration is the same in both cases. The brevity of the Spartans was the result of studied affectation. They sought, by the insolence of threats obscurely insinuated in a sort of demi-oracular language, to impose upon others — perhaps they imposed upon themselves — an extravagant opinion of their mysterious power. The secret was found out at last, and their anger bubbled over in big words and lengthened sentences. The love of Rosaline is as much affected on the part of Romeo, and it explodes in wire-drawn conceits.

> "When the devout religion of mine eye
> Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
> And those who often drowned could never die,
> Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars.
> One fairer than my love! — the all-seeing sun
> Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun."

It is no wonder that a gentleman who is so clever as to be able to say such extremely fine things, forgets, in the next scene, the devout religion of his eye, without any apprehension of the transparent heretic being burnt for a liar by the transmutation of tears into the flames of an *auto da fe*. He is doomed to discover that love in his case is not a madness most discreet when he defies the stars; there are then no lines of magnificent declamation.

> "Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!
> Thou knowest my lodging; get me ink and paper,
> And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night."

Nothing can be plainer prose than these verses. But how were they delivered? Balthazar will tell us;

"Pardon me, sir; I dare not leave you thus;
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure."

Again, nothing can be more quiet than his final determination:

"Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night."

It is plain Juliet—unattended by any romantic epithet of love. There is nothing about "Cupid's arrow," or "Dian's wit;" no honeyed word escapes his lips—nor again does any accent of despair. His mind is so made up—the whole course of the short remainder of his life so unalterably fixed, that it is perfectly useless to think more about it. He has full leisure to reflect without disturbance upon the details of the squalid penury which made him set down the poor apothecary as a fit instrument for what now had become his "need;" and he offers his proposition of purchasing that soon-speeding gear which is to hurry him out of life, with the same business-like tone as if he were purchasing a pennyworth of sugar-candy. When the apothecary suggests the danger of selling such drugs, Romeo can reflect on the folly of scrupling to sacrifice life when the holder of it is so poor and unfortunate.* Gallant and gay of appearance himself, he tells his new-found acquaintance that bareness, famine, oppression, ragged misery, the hollow cheek and the hungry eye, are fitting reasons why death should be desired, not avoided; and with a cool philosophy assures him that gold is worse poison than the compound which hurries the life-weary taker out of the world. The language of desperation can not be more dismally determined. What did the apothecary think of his customer as he pocketed the forty ducats? "There you go, lad—there you go," he might have said—"there you go with that in your girdle that, if you had the strength of twenty men, would straight despatch you. Well do I know the use for which you intend it. To-morrow's sun sees

* Act V. Scene 1.

not you alive. And you philosophize to me on the necessity of buying food and getting into flesh. You taunt my poverty—you laugh at my rags—you bid me defy the law—you tell me the world is my enemy. It may be so, lad—it may be so; but less tattered in my garment than your heart—less harassed by law of one kind or another my pursuit than yours. What ails that lad? I know not, neither do I care. But that he should moralize to me on the hard lot which I experience—that he, with those looks and those accents, should fancy that I, amid my beggarly account of empty boxes, am less happy than he—ha! ha! ha!—it is something to make one laugh. Ride your way, boy: I have your forty ducats in my purse, and you my drug in your pocket. And the law! Well! What can the executioner do worse to me in my penury and my age than you have doomed for yourself in your youth and splendor. I carry not my hangman in my saddle as I ride along. And the curses which the rabble may pour upon my dying moments—what are they to the howling gurgle which, now rising from your heart, is deafening your ears? Adieu, boy—adieu!—and keep your philosophy for yourself. Ho! ho! ho!"

But had any other passion or pursuit occupied Romeo, he would have been equally unlucky as in his love. Ill fortune has marked him for her own. From beginning to end he intends the best; but his interfering is ever for the worst. It is evident that he has not taken any part in the family feud which divides Verona, and his first attachment is to a lady of the antagonist house.* To see that lady—perhaps to

* Rosaline was niece of Capulet. The list of persons invited to the ball [Act I. Scene 2] is:—

> "Signior Martino, and his wife and daughters;
> County Anselm[o], and his beauteous sisters;
> The lady widow of Vetruvio;
> Signior Placentio, and his lovely nieces;
> Mercutio, and his brother Valentine;

mark that he has had no share in the tumult of the morning—he goes to a ball given by Capulet, at which the suitor accepted by the family is to be introduced to Juliet as her intended husband. Paris is in every way an eligible match.

"Verona's summer hath not such a flower."

He who has slain him addresses his corse as that of the "noble County Paris," with a kindly remembrance that he was kinsman of a friend slain in Romeo's own cause. Nothing can be more fervent, more honorable, or more delicates than his devoted and considerate wooing. His grief at the lost of Juliet is expressed in few words; but its sincerity is told by his midnight and secret visit to the tomb of her whom living he had honored, and on whom, when dead, he could not restrain himself from lavishing funereal homage. Secure of the favor of her father, no serious objection could be anticipated from herself. When questioned by her mother, she readily promises obedience to parental wishes, and goes to the ball determined to "look to like, if looking liking move." Everything glides on in smooth current till the appearance of him whose presence is deadly. Romeo himself is a most reluctant visitor. He apprehends that the consequences of the night's revels will be the vile forfeit of a despised life by an untimely death, but submits to his destiny. He foresees that it is no wit to go, but consoles himself with the reflection that he "means well in going to this mask." His intentions, as usual, are good; and, as usual, their consequences are ruinous.

He yields to his passion, and marries Juliet. For this hasty

Mine uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters;
My fair niece Rosaline; [and] Livia;
Signior Valentio, and his cousin Tybalt;
Lucio, and the lively Helena."

I have altered *Anselme* to the Italian form *Anselmo*, and in the seventh line inserted *and*. I think I may fairly claim this list as being in verse. It is always printed as prose.—W. M.

act he has the excuse that the match may put an end to the discord between the families. Friar Lawrence hopes that

> "this alliance may so happy prove
> To turn your households' rancor into love."

It certainly has that effect in the end of the play, but it is by the suicidal deaths of the flower and hope of both families. Capulet and Montague tender, in a gloomy peace, the hands of friendship, over the untimely grave of the poor sacrifices to their enmity. Had he met her elsewhere than in her father's house, he might have succeeded in a more prosperous love. But there his visit is looked upon by the professed duellist Tybalt, hot from the encounter of the morning, and enraged that he was baulked of a victim, as an intrusion and an insult. The fiery partisan is curbed with much difficulty by his uncle; and withdraws, his flesh trembling with wilful choler, determined to wreak vengeance at the first opportunity on the intruder. It is not long before the opportunity offers. Vainly does Romeo endeavor to pacify the bullying swordsman — vainly does he protest that he loves the name of Capulet — vainly does he decline the proffered duel. His good intentions are again doomed to be frustrated. There stands by his side as mad-blooded a spirit as Tybalt himself, and Mercutio, all unconscious of the reasons why Romeo refuses to fight, takes up the abandoned quarrel. The star of the unlucky man is ever in the ascendant. His ill-omened interference slays his friend. Had he kept quiet, the issue might have been different; but the power that had the steerage of his course had destined that the uplifting of his sword was to be the signal of death of his very friend. And when the dying Mercutio says: "Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm;" he can only offer the excuse, which is always true, and always unavailing, "I thought all for the best." All his visions of reconciliation between the houses are dissipated. How can he now avoid

fighting with Tybalt? His best friend lies dead, slain in his own quarrel, through his own accursed intermeddling; and the swaggering victor, still hot from the slaughter, comes back to triumph over the dead. Who with the heart and spirit of a man could under such circumstances refrain from exclaiming:—

> "Away to heaven, respective lenity!
> And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now."

Vanish gentle breath, calm words, knees humbly bowed!—his weapon in an instant glitters in the blazing sun; and as with a lightning flash—as rapidly and resistlessly—before Benvolio can pull his sword from the scabbard, Tybalt, whom his kindred deemed a match for twenty men, is laid by the side of him who but a moment before had been the victim of his blade.* What avails the practised science of the duellist, the gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause!—how weak is the immortal passado, or the punto reverso, the hay, or all the other learned devices of Vincence Saviola, against the whirlwind rage of a man driven to desperation by all that can rouse fury or stimulate hatred! He sees the blood of his friend red upon the ground; the accents of gross and unprovoked outrage ring in his ears; the perverse and obstinate insolence of a bravo confident in his skill, and depending upon it to insure him impunity, has marred his hopes; and the butcher of the silk-button has no chance against the demon which he has evoked. "A la stoccata" carries it not away in this encounter; but Romeo exults not in his death. He stands amazed, and is with difficulty hurried off, exclaiming against the constant fate which perpetually throws him in the way of misfortune. Well, indeed, may Friar Lawrence address him by the title of "thou fearful man!"—as a man whose career through life is calculated to inspire terror. Well may he say to him that

* Act III. Scene 1.

> "Affliction is enamored of thy parts,
> And thou art wedded to calamity."

And slight is the attention which Romeo pays to the eloquent arguments by which it is proved that he had every reason to consider himself happy. When the friar assures him that

> "A pack of blessings lights upon the back,
> Happiness courts thee in her best array,"

the nurse may think it a discourse of learning and good counsel, fit to detain an enraptured auditor all the night. Romeo feels it in his case to be an idle declamation, unworthy of an answer.

The events which occur during his enforced absence, the haste of Paris to be wedded, the zeal of old Capulet in promoting the wishes of his expected son-in-law, the desperate expedient of the sleeping-draught,* the accident which prevented

* Is there not some mistake in the length of time that this sleeping-draught is to occupy, if we consider the text as it now stands to be correct? Friar Lawrence says to Juliet, when he is recommending the expedient:—

> "Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
> And this distilled liquor drink thou off:
> When presently through all thy veins shall run
> A cold and drowsy humor, which shall seize
> Each vital spirit, &c.
> And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
> Thou shalt continue *two and forty hours*,
> And then awake as from a pleasant sleep."

Juliet retires to bed on Tuesday night, at a somewhat early hour. Her mother says after she departs: "'Tis now near night." Say it is eleven o'clock; forty-two hours from that hour bring us to five o'clock in the evening of Thursday; and yet we find the time of her awakening fixed in profound darkness, and not long before the dawn. We should allow at least ten hours more, and read:—

> "Thou shalt remain full *two and fifty hours*,"—

which would fix her awakening at three o'clock in the morning, a time which has been marked in a former scene as the approach of day.

> "*Cap.* Come, stir, stir, stir! The second cock has crowed,—
> The curfew bell hath rung—'tis three o'clock."

Immediately after he says: "Good faith, 'tis day." This observation may

the delivery of the friar's letter, the officious haste of Balthazar to communicate the tidings of Juliet's burial, are all matters out of his control. But the mode of his death is chosen by himself; and in that he is as unlucky as in everything else. Utterly loathing life, the manner of his leaving it must be instantaneous. He stipulates that the poison by which he is to die shall not be slow of effect. He calls for

> "Such soon-speeding gear
> As will disperse itself through all the veins,
> That the life-weary taker may fall dead."

He leaves himself no chance of escape. Instant death is in his hand; and, thanking the true apothecary for the quickness of his drugs, he scarcely leaves himself a moment with a kiss to die. If he had been less in a hurry — if he had not felt it impossible to delay posting off to Verona for a single night — if his riding had been less rapid, or his medicine less sudden in its effect, he might have lived. The friar was at hand to release Juliet from her tomb the very instant after the fatal phial had been emptied. That instant was enough; the unlucky man had effected his purpose, just when there was still a chance that

appear superfluously minute; but those who take the pains of reading this play critically will find that it is dated throughout with a most exact adoption to hours. We can time almost every event. Ex. gr. Juliet dismissed the nurse on her errand to Romeo when the clock struck nine, and complains that she has not returned at twelve. At twelve she does return, and Juliet immediately proceeds to Friar Lawrence's cell, where she is married without delay. Romeo parts with his bride at once, and meets his friends while "the day is hot." Juliet at the same hour addresses her prayer to the fiery-footed steeds of Phœbus, too slowly for her feelings progressing toward the west. The same exactness is observed in every part of the play.

I may remark, as another instance of Romeo's ill luck, the change of the original wedding-day. When pressed by Paris, old Capulet says that "Wednesday is too soon — on Thursday let it be;" but afterward, when he imagines that his daughter is inclined to consult his wishes, he fixes it for Wednesday, even though his wife observes that Thursday is time enough. Had this day not been lost, the letter of Friar Lawrence might still have been forwarded to Mantua to explain what had occurred.—W. M.

things might be amended. Those who wrote the scene between Romeo and Juliet, which is intended to be pathetic, after her awakening and before his death, quite mistake the character of the hero of the play. I do not blame them for their poetry, which is as good as that of second-rate writers of tragedy in general; and think them, on the whole, deserving of our commendation for giving us an additional proof how unable clever men upon town are to follow the conceptions of genius. Shakespeare, if he thought it consistent with the character which he had with so much deliberation framed, could have written a parting scene at least as good as that with which his tragedy has been supplied; but he saw the inconsistency, though his unasked assistants did not. They tell us they did it to consult popular taste. I do not believe them. I am sure that popular taste would approve of a recurrence to the old play in all its parts; but a harlotry play-actor might think it hard upon him to be deprived of a "point," pointless as that point may be.*

Haste is made a remarkable characteristic of Romeo—because it is at once the parent and the child of uniform misfortune. As from the acorn springs the oak, and from the oak the acorn, so does the temperament that inclines to haste predispose to misadventure, and a continuance of misadventure confirms

* The alteration was made by Garrick, on the basis of a similar scene by Otway, in his "Caius Marius," a sort of Romanized "Romeo and Juliet." Romeo is made present when Juliet wakes from her trance, after he has himself taken poison, and when he dies, Juliet faints on his body. Part of the "business" of this scene (which is what we have now usually represented on the stage) consists in Romeo's bringing Juliet from the tomb. I recollect, at Liverpool theatre some years ago, when the late Josephine Clifton (tall enough to have been a suitable spouse for Anak) performed Juliet to the Romeo of a small-statured amateur named Godfrey, it was utterly impossible for the "mite of a man" to attempt carrying out the stage directions, and the fair and lofty Juliet, supposed to have scarcely awakened from her death-like trance, had to violate histrionic propriety by picking herself up, and quietly walking out of the tomb. As might be expected, this almost converted the tragedy into a farce.—M.

the habit of haste. A man whom his rashness has made continually unlucky, is strengthened in the determination to persevere in his rapid movements by the very feeling that the "run" is against him, and that it is of no use to think. In the case of Romeo, he leaves it all to the steerage of Heaven, *i. e.*, to the heady current of his own passions; and he succeeds accordingly. All through the play care is taken to show his impatience. The very first word he speaks indicates that he is anxious for the quick passage of time:—

> "*Ben.* Good morrow, cousin.
> *Rom.* Is the day so young?
> *Ben.* But new struck nine.
> *Rom.* Ay me, sad hours seem long."

The same impatience marks his speech in the moment of death:—

> "O true apothecary,
> Thy drugs are quick!"

From his first words to his last the feeling is the same. The lady of his love, even in the full swell of her awakened affections, can not avoid remarking that his contract is—

> "Too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
> Too like the lightning, which does cease to be
> Ere one can say, It lightens."

When he urges his marriage on the friar—

> "*Rom.* O let us home: I stand on sudden haste.
> *Friar.* Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast."

The metaphors put into his mouth are remarkable for their allusions to abrupt and violent haste. He wishes that he may die:—

> "As violently as hasty powder fired
> Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb."

When he thinks that Juliet mentions his name in anger, it is—

> "As if that name,
> Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
> Did murder her."

When Lawrence remonstrates with him on his violence, he compares the use to which he puts his wit to—

> "Powder in a skilless soldier's flask;"

and tells him that—

> "Violent delights have violent ends,
> And in their triumph die; like fire and powder,
> Which, as they kiss, consume."

Lightning, flame, shot, explosion, are the favorite parallels to the conduct and career of Romeo. Swift are his loves; as swift to enter his thought, the mischief which ends them for ever. Rapid have been all the pulsations of his life; as rapid, the determination which decides that they shall beat no more.*

A gentleman he was in heart and soul. All his habitual companions love him: Benvolio and Mercutio, who represent the young gentlemen of his house, are ready to peril their lives, and to strain all their energies, serious or gay, in his service.

* Schlegel, who describes the play as "a picture of love and its pitiable fate, in a world whose atmosphere is too sharp for this the tenderest blossom of human life," has not touched, *per se*, on the character of Romeo. Dr. Ulrici (who views the writings of Shakespeare through an æsthetical medium) considers Love as hurrying along, "with demoniacal and irresistible energy, all who misuse its godlike gifts, and who, plunged in the abyss of self-forgetfulness, lavish all the riches of a heavenly endowment on the lowly sphere of their *earthly* existence," and argues that Romeo was hurried along, to his sad catastrophe, because "the faculty of loving, which pervades his whole being, and which is assigned to him in so eminent a degree, instead of being refined and spiritualized by its sexual object and passion, becomes merged in passionate yearning and desire." None of the criticisms which I have encountered, however, approach so nearly as Ulrici's (unfortunate in its verbosity), which recognises a sort of ruling necessity, springing of the reigning feuds between their several houses, in all that the two lovers do. Maginn, it will be seen, goes much beyond this, and views Romeo as a sort of Murad the Unlucky, driven upon misfortune by the compelling influence of a crushing Fate.—M.

His father is filled with an anxiety on his account so delicate, that he will not venture to interfere with his son's private sorrows, while he desires to discover their source, and if possible to relieve them. The heart of his mother bursts in his calamity; the head of the rival house bestows upon him the warmest panegyrics; the tutor of his youth sacrifices every thing to gratify his wishes; his servant, though no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*, dares not remonstrate with him on his intentions, even when they are avowed to be savage-wild—

> "More fierce, and more inexorable far,
> Than empty tigers or the roaring sea"—

but with an eager solicitude he breaks his commands by remaining as close as he can venture, to watch over his safety. Kind is he to all. He wins the heart of the romantic Juliet by his tender gallantry: the world-minded nurse praises him for being as gentle as a lamb. When it is necessary or natural that the Prince or Lady Montague should speak harshly of him, it is done in his absence. No words of anger or reproach are addressed to his ears save by Tybalt; and from him they are in some sort a compliment, as signifying that the self-chosen prize-fighter of the opposing party deems Romeo the worthiest antagonist of his blade. We find that he fights two blood-stained duels, but both are forced upon him; the first under circumstances impossible of avoidance, the last after the humblest supplications to be excused.

> "O begone!
> By heaven, I love thee better than myself,
> For I came hither armed against myself.
> Stay not; begone!—live, and hereafter say
> A madman's mercy bade thee run away."

With all the qualities and emotions which can inspire affection and esteem—with all the advantages that birth, heaven, and earth, could at once confer—with the most honorable feelings

and the kindliest intentions — he is eminently an unlucky man. The record of his actions in the play before us does not extend to the period of a week; but we feel that there is no dramatic straining to shorten their course. Every thing occurs naturally and probably. It was his concluding week; but it tells us all his life. Fortune was against him; and would have been against him, no matter what might have been his pursuit. He was born to win battles but to lose campaigns. If we desired to moralize with the harsh-minded satirist, who never can be suspected of romance, we should join with him in extracting as a moral from the play —

> "Nullum habes numen, si sit prudentia; sed te
> Nos facimus, Fortuna, deam cœloque locamus;"

and attribute the mishaps of Romeo, not to want of fortune, but of prudence. Philosophy and poetry differ not in essentials, and the stern censure of Juvenal is just. But still, when looking on the timeless tomb of Romeo, and contemplating the short and sad career through which he ran, we can not help recollecting his mourning words over his dying friend, and suggest as an inscription over the monument of the luckless gentleman,

"I THOUGHT ALL FOR THE BEST."

NO. IV.—BOTTOM, THE WEAVER.

"Some men are born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and others with a wooden ladle."—*Ancient Proverb.*

"Then did the sun on dungnill shine."—*Ancient Pistol.*

It has often been remarked that it is impossible to play the enchanted scenes of Bottom with any effect.* In reading the poem we idealize the ass-head; we can conceive that it represents in some grotesque sort the various passions and emotions

* "The Midsummer Night's Dream, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. All that is finest in the play is lost in the representation. The spectacle was grand; but the spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled. Poetry and the stage do not agree well together. The attempt to reconcile them in this instance fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The *ideal* can have no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective: everything there is in the fore-ground. That which was merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. Where all is left to the imagination (as is the case in reading) every circumstance, near or remote, has an equal chance of being kept in mind, and tells according to the mixed impression of all that has been suggested. But the imagination can not sufficiently qualify the actual impressions of the senses. Any offence given to the eye is not to be got rid of by explanation. Thus Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage, it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy can not be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate Wall or Moonshine. Fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so. Monsters are not shocking if they are seen at a proper distance. When ghosts appear at midday, when apparitions stalk along Cheapside, then may the Midsummer Night's Dream be represented without injury at Covent Garden or at Drury Lane. The boards of a theatre and the regions of fancy are not the same thing."—Hazlitt.

of its wearer; that it assumes a character of dull jocosity, or duller sapience, in his conversations with Titania and the fairies; and when calling for the assistance of Messrs. Peas-blossom and Mustard-seed to scratch his head, or of the Queen to procure him a peck of provender or a bottle of hay, it expresses some puzzled wonder of the new sensations its wearer must experience in tinglings never felt before, and cravings for food until then unsuited to his appetite. But on the stage this is impossible. As the manager can not procure for his fairies representatives of such tiny dimensions as to be in danger of being overflown by the bursting of the honey-bag of an humble-bee, so it is impossible that the art of the property-man can furnish Bottom with an ass-head capable of expressing the mixed feelings of humanity and asinity which actuate the metamorphosed weaver. It is but a paste-board head, and that is all. The jest is over the first moment after his appearance; and, having laughed at it once, we can not laugh at it any more. As in the case of a man who, at a masquerade, has chosen a character depending for its attraction merely on costume—we may admire a Don Quixote, if properly bedecked in Mambrino's helmet and the other habiliments of the Knight of La Mancha, at a first glance, but we think him scarcely worthy of a second.

So it is with the Bottom of the stage; the Bottom of the poem is a different person. Shakespeare in many parts of his plays drops hints, "vocal to the intelligent," that he feels the difficulty of bringing his ideas adequately before the minds of theatrical spectators. In the opening address of the Chorus of Henry V. he asks pardon for having dared

> "On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? or, may we cram
> Within this wooden O, the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?"

and requests his audience to piece out the imperfections of the

theatre with their thoughts. This is an apology for the ordinary and physical defects of any stage — especially an ill-furnished one; and it requires no great straining of our imaginary forces to submit to them. Even Ducrow himself,* with appliances and means to boot a hundredfold more magnificent and copious than any that were at the command of Shakespeare, does not deceive us into the belief that his fifty horses, trained and managed with surpassing skill, and mounted by agile and practised riders, dressed in splendid and carefully-considered costumes, are actually fighting the battle of Waterloo, but we willingly lend ourselves to the delusion. In like manner, we may be sure that in the days of Queen Elizabeth the audience of the Globe complied with the advice of Chorus, and,

> "Minding true things by what their mockeries be,"

were contented that

> "Four or five most vile and ragged foils
> Right ill-disposed, in brawl ridiculous,"

should serve to represent to their imagination the name of Agincourt.

We consent to this just as we do to Greeks and Romans speaking English on the stage of London, or French on that of Paris; or to men of any country speaking in verse at all; or

* The late Andrew Ducrow, for several years manager of Astley's Amphitheatre, in London, was literally the greatest equestrian performer of his time in England. He had no education, but great natural quickness of intellect. His performances were at once picturesque and classical — particularly his representations of ancient statues. In the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* he is repeatedly referred to. North describes him as "indeed a prodigy," while the Shepherd asked, "Wha the deevil was Castor, that the ancients made a god o' for his horsemanship — a god o' and a star — in comparison wi' your Ducraw?" Tickler declared that, "the glory of Ducrow was in his poetical inspirations." North pronounced his Living Statues to be "perfect — the very Prometheus of Æschylus." Ducrow amassed a very large fortune, and is interred in a particularly grand mausoleum (ultra-Egyptian as to architectural style), in Kensal-Green Cemetery, near London.—M.

to all the other demands made upon our belief in playing. We can dispense with the assistance of such downright matter-of-fact interpreters as those who volunteer their services to assure us that the lion in Pyramus and Thisbe is not a lion in good earnest, but merely Snug, the Joiner. But there are difficulties of a more subtle and metaphysical kind to be got over, and to these, too, Shakespeare not unfrequently alludes. In the play before us — Midsummer Night's Dream — for example, when Hippolita speaks scornfully of the tragedy in which Bottom holds so conspicuous a part, Theseus answers, that the best of this kind (scenic performances) are but shadows, and the worst no worse if imagination amend them. She answers that it must be *your* imagination then, not *theirs*. He retorts with a joke on the vanity of actors, and the conversation is immediately changed. The meaning of the Duke is, that however we may laugh at the silliness of Bottom and his companions in their ridiculous play, the author labors under no more than the common calamity of dramatists. They are all but dealers in shadowy representations of life; and if the worst among them can set the mind of the spectator at work, he is equal to the best. The answer to Theseus is, that none but the best, or, at all events, those who approach to excellence, can call with success upon imagination to invest their shadows with substance. Such playwrights as Quince, the Carpenter — and they abound in every literature and every theatre — draw our attention so much to the absurdity of the performance actually going on before us, that we have no inclination to trouble ourselves with considering what substance in the background their shadows should have represented. Shakespeare intended the remark as a compliment or a consolation to less successful wooers of the comic or the tragic Muse, and touches briefly on the matter; but it was also intended as an excuse for the want of effect upon the stage of some of the finer touches of such dramatists as himself,

and an appeal to all true judges of poetry to bring it before the tribunal of their own imagination; making but a matter of secondary inquiry how it appears in a theatre, as delivered by those who, whatever others may think of them, would, if taken at their own estimation, "pass for excellent men." His own magnificent creation of fairy land in the Athenian wood must have been in his mind, and he asks an indulgent play of fancy not more for Oberon and Titania, the glittering rulers of the elements, who meet

> "—— on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
> By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
> Or on the beached margent of the sea,
> To dance their ringlets to the whistling wind,"

than for the shrewd and knavish Robin Goodfellow, the lord of practical jokes, or the dull and conceited Bottom, "the shallowest thickskin of the barren sort," rapt so wondrously from his loom and shuttle, his threads and thrums, to be the favored lover of the Queen of Faëry, fresh from the spiced Indian air, and lulled with dances and delight amid the fragrance of the sweetest flowers, filling with their luscious perfume a moonlighted forest.

One part of Bottom's character is easily understood, and is often well acted. Amid his own companions he is the cock of the walk. His genius is admitted without hesitation. When he is lost in the wood, Quince gives up the play as marred. There is no man in Athens able to take the first part in tragedy but himself. Flute declares that he has the best wit of any handicraftman in the city. This does not satisfy the still warmer admirer,* who insists on the goodliness of his person,

* Act IV. Scene 2. Athens.— Quince's House.— Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.

"*Qui.* Have you sent to Bottom's house yet, &c.?

Flu. He hath simply the best wit of any man in Athens.

Qui. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

and the fineness of his voice. When it seems hopeless that he should appear, the cause of the stage is given up as utterly lost. When he returns, it is hailed as the "courageous day," and the "happy hour," which is to restore the legitimate drama. It is no wonder that this perpetual flattery fills him with a most inordinate opinion of his own powers. There is not a part in the play which he can not perform. As a lover, he promises to make the audience weep; but his talent is still more shining in the Herculean vein of a tyrant. The manliness of his countenance, he admits, incapacitates him from acting the part of a heroine; but, give him a mask, and he is sure to captivate by the soft melody of his voice. But, lest it should be thought this melodious softness was alone his characteristic, he claims the part of the lion, which he is to discharge with so terrific a roar as to call forth the marked approbation of the warlike Duke; and yet, when the danger is suggested of frightening the ladies, who all, Amazons as they were, must be daunted by sounds so fear-inspiring, he professes himself gifted with a power of compass capable of imitating, even in the character of a roaring lion, the gentleness of the sucking dove, or the sweetness of the

Flu. You must say paragon; a paramour is, God bless us! a thing of naught."

I propose that the second admirer's speech be given to Snout, who else has not anything to say, and is introduced on the stage to no purpose. The few words he says elsewhere in the play are all ridiculous; and the mistake of "paramour" for "paragon" is more appropriate to him than to Quince, who corrects the *cacology* of Bottom himself. [Act III., Scene 1.

> "*Pyr.* Thisby, the flower of odious savors sweet.
> *Qui.* Odors — odors."]

And, besides, Quince, the playwright, manager, and ballad-monger,

["I'll get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream," says Bottom,] is of too much importance in the company to be rebuked by so inferior a personage as Flute. In the original draft of their play Snout was to perform Pyramus's father, and Quince, Thisbe's father, but those parts are omitted; Snout is the representative of Wall, and Quince has no part assigned him. Perhaps this was intentional, as another proof of bungling.—W. M.

nightingale. He is equally fit for all parts, and in all parts calculated to outshine the rest. This is allowed; but, as it is impossible that he can perform them all, he is restricted to the principal. It is with the softest compliments that he is induced to abandon the parts of Thisbe and the lion for that of Pyramus. Quince assures him that he can play none other, because "Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentlemanlike man; *therefore* YOU must undertake it." What man of woman born, could resist flattery so unsparingly administered? the well-puffed performer consents, and though he knows nothing of the play, and is unable to tell whether the part for which he is cast is that of a lover or a tyrant, undertakes to discharge it with a calm and heroic indifference as to the color of the beard he is to wear, being confident, under any circumstances, of success, whether that most important part of the costume be straw-colored or orange-tawny, French crown or purple in grain. With equal confidence he gets through his performance. The wit of the courtiers, or the presence of the Duke, has no effect upon his nerves. He alone speaks to the audience in his own character, not for a moment sinking the personal consequence of Bottom in the assumed port of Pyramus. He sets Theseus right on a point of the play with cool importance; and replies to the jest of Demetrius (which he does not understand) with the self-command of ignorant indifference.* We may be sure that he was abundantly contented with his appearance, and retired to drink in, with ear well deserving of the promotion it had attained under the patronage of Robin Goodfellow, the applause of his companions. It is true that Oberon designates him as a "hateful fool;" that Puck stigmatizes him as the greatest blockhead of the set; that the audience of wits and courtiers before whom he has performed vote him to be an ass: but what

* Act V. Scene 1.

matter is that? He mixes not with them; he hears not their sarcasms; he could not understand their criticisms; and, in the congenial company of the crew of patches and base mechanicals who admire him, lives happy in the fame of being *the* Nicholas Bottom, who, by consent, to him universal and world-encompassing, is voted to be *the* Pyramus—*the* prop of the stage—*the* sole support of the drama.*

* "Bottom, the Weaver, is a character that has not had justice done him. He is the most romantic of mechanics. And what a list of companions he has — Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Joiner, Flute the Bellows-mender, Snout the Tinker, Starveling the Tailor; and then again, what a group of fairy attendants, Puck, Peas-blossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed! It has been observed that Shakespeare's characters are constructed upon deep physiological principles; and there is something in this play which looks very like it. Bottom, the Weaver, who takes the lead of

> "'This crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
> That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,'

follows a sedentary trade, and he is accordingly represented as conceited, serious, and fantastical. He is ready to undertake any thing and every thing, as if it was as much a matter of course as the motion of his loom and shuttle. He is for playing the tyrant, the lover, the lady, the lion. 'He will roar that it shall do any man's heart good to hear him;' and this being objected to as improper, he still has a resource in his good opinion of himself, and 'will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.' Snug, the Joiner, is the moral man of the piece, who proceeds by measurement and discretion in all things. You see him with his rule and compasses in his hand. 'Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.' 'You may do it extempore,' says Quince, 'for it is nothing but roaring.' Starveling, the Tailor, keeps the peace, and objects to the lion and the drawn sword. 'I believe we must leave the killing out when all's done.' Starveling, however, does not start the objections himself, but seconds them when made by others, as if he had not spirit to express even his fears without encouragement. It is too much to suppose all this intentional: but it very luckily falls out so. Nature includes all that is implied in the most subtle analytical distinctions; and the same distinctions will be found in Shakespeare. Bottom, who is not only chief actor, but stage-manager for the occasion, has a device to obviate the danger of frightening the ladies: "Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom, the Weaver: this will put them out of fear.' Bottom seems to have understood the sub-

Self-conceit, as great and undisguised as that of poor Bottom, is to be found in all classes and in all circles, and is especially pardonable in what it is considered genteel or learned to call "the histrionic profession." The triumphs of the player are evanescent. In no other department of intellect, real or simulated, does the applause bestowed upon the living artist bear so melancholy a disproportion to the repute awaiting him after the generation passes which has witnessed his exertions. According to the poet himself, the poor player

> "Struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more."

Shakespeare's own rank as a performer was not high, and his reflections on the business of an actor are in general splenetic and discontented. He might have said—though indeed it would not have fitted with the mood of mind of the despairing tyrant into whose mouth the reflection is put—that the well-graced actor, who leaves the scene not merely after strutting and fretting, but after exhibiting power and genius to the utmost degree at which his art can aim, amid the thundering applause —or, what is a deeper tribute, the breathless silence of excited agitated thousands—is destined ere long to an oblivion as undisturbed as that of his humbler fellow-artist, whose prattle is without contradiction voted to be tedious. Kemble is fading fast from our view. The gossip connected with every thing about Johnson keeps Garrick before us, but the interest concerning him daily becomes less and less. Of Betterton, Booth,

ject of dramatic illusion at least as well as any modern essayist. If our holyday mechanic rules the roast among his fellows, he is no less at home in his new character of an ass, 'with amiable cheeks, and fair large ears.' He instinctively acquires a most learned taste, and grows fastidious in the choice of dried peas and bottled hay. He is quite familiar with his new attendants, and assigns them their parts with all due gravity. 'Monsieur Cobweb, good Monsieur, get your weapon in your hand, and kill me a red-hipt humble-bee on the top of a thistle, and, good Monsieur, bring me the honey-bag.' What an exact knowledge is here shown of natural history!"—HAZLITT.

Quin, we remember little more than the names. The Lowins and Burbages of the days of Shakespeare are known only to the dramatic antiquary, or the poring commentator, anxious to preserve every scrap of information that may bear upon the elucidation of a text, or aid toward the history of the author. With the sense of this transitory fame before them, it is only natural that players should grasp at as much as comes within their reach while they have power of doing so. It would be a curious speculation to inquire which personally has the greater enjoyment — the author, neglected in life, and working for immortal renown, or the actor living among huzzas, and consigned to forgetfulness the moment that his hour is past. I suppose, on the usual principle of compensation, each finds in himself springs of happiness and self-comfort. The dim distance, in shadowy and limitless grandeur, fills with solemn musings the soul of the one; the gorgeous gilding of the sunny scenery in the foreground kindles with rapturous joy the heart of the other. Shenstone lays it down as a principle, that, if it were left to our choice whether all persons should speak ill of us to our faces, and with applause behind our backs, or, *vice versâ*, that the applause should be lavished upon ourselves, and the ill-speaking kept for our absence, we should choose the latter; because, if we never heard the evil report, we should know nothing about our bad reputation, while, on the contrary, the good opinion others entertained of us would be of no avail if nothing reached our ears but words of anger or reproach. Since, after all, it is from within, and not from without, the sources of joy or sorrow bubble up, it does not matter so very much as the sensitive Lord of Leasowes* imagines what the

* William Shenstone, an English poet, devoted himself, early in life, to the embellishment and improvement of his paternal estate, in Shropshire, called "The Leasowes." He made the place very picturesque, and died nearly insolvent, from the expenses in which his improvements involved him.—M.

opinions of others concerning us may be—at least as compared with those which, right or wrong, we form of ourselves. The question is of no great practical importance; and yet it would be somewhat curious to speculate in the manner of Hamlet, if we could do so, on the feelings of Kean and Wordsworth in the zenith of the popularity of the former, when he was worshipped as a demi-god by the unquestionable, or, at least, the scarce-questioned dispensers of daily renown; while the other by the recognised oracles of critical sagacity was set down as a jackass more obtuse than that belabored by his own Peter Bell.

Pardon, therefore, the wearers of the sock and buskin for being obnoxious to such criticism as that lavished by Quince upon Bottom.* We have no traces left us of what constituted the ordinary puffery of the Elizabethan days; but, as human nature is the same in all ages, we must suppose the trade to have been in its own way as vigorously carried on then as now. And, without hinting at any thing personal, do we not, week after week, find attached to every performer making (whether with justice or not is no part of the consideration) pretensions to the omnifarious abilities of Bottom, some Peter Quince, who sticks to that Bottom with the tenacity of a leech, and is ready to swear that *he*, the Bottom, is the only man in Athens; that his appearance spreads an universal joy; that his occultation involves the world in dramatical eclipse; that his performance of the lover can only be surpassed by his performance of the tyrant; and that it must puzzle an impartial public to decide

* Schlegel, who bestows high praise on the Midsummer Night's Dream, places it almost on a level with the Tempest, which, he says, surpasses it "in profound and original characterization"—it is strange that Ulrici, the countryman of Schlegel, disparages characterization as "that cheap and easy criterion of poetry." Schlegel adds, "The droll wonder of Bottom's transformation is merely the translation of a metaphor in its literal sense; but in his behavior during the tender homage of the Fairy Queen we have an amusing proof how much the consciousness of such a head-dress heightens the effect of his usual folly."—M.

whether nature and art, genius and study, designed him for a heroine couchant, or a rampant lion. To this it is little wonder that the object of applause lets down his ears too often donkey-like, and permits himself to be scratched by a Master Cobweb, spun though he be by a bottle-bellied spider, or a Master Peas-blossom, who can only claim Mistress Squash for his mother and Master Peascod for his father. In Peter Quince, Shakespeare shadowed forth, by anticipation, Sheridan's Puff. Quince is a fool, and Puff a rogue; and yet I think the criticism of the elder reviewer just as valuable. It is in the end as useful to the object of applause to be told, in plain terms, that he alone can act Pyramus because he is a sweet-faced man, a proper man, a most lovely, gentlemanlike man, as to have the same flummery administered under the guise of mock philosophy, with gabbling intonations about breadth, profoundness, depth, length, thickness, and so forth; which, being interpreted, signify, in many cases, "I know nothing about acting or writing, but I do know that you can give me a box or a dinner, and therefore let me play to your Bottom, Quince, the Carpenter, in an ass's head, intended as a representation of Aristotle the Stagirite."

Alas! I am a wandering far away from the forest. I can only plead that my guide has led me into my own congenial land of newspaper* from his native soil of poetry. But he never long remains out of his own domain, and the jokes and jests upon the unlucky company who undertook to perform

> "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
> And his love Thisbe, very tragical mirth,"

are but intrusive matter amid the romantic loves, all chivalrous and a little classical, of Theseus and Hippolita, and the jeal-

* During the greater part of Dr. Maginn's residence in London (which included the last twenty years of his life), he was connected with the newspaper press — principally with *The Standard*, a daily journal which has constantly advocated ultra-protestant and high-tory principles.—M.

ousies unearthly, and yet so earthly, of Fairy Land. The romance of early Greece was sometimes strangely confused by the romance of the Middle Ages. It would take a long essay on the mixture of legends derived from all ages and countries to account for the production of such a personage as the "Duke ycleped Theseus" and his following; and the fairy mythology of the most authentic superstitions would be ransacked in vain to discover exact authorities for the Shakespearian Oberon and Titania. But, no matter whence derived, the author knew well that in his hands the chivalrous and classical, the airy and the imaginative, were safe. It was necessary for his drama to introduce among his fairy party a creature of earth's mould, and he has so done it as in the midst of his mirth to convey a picturesque satire on the fortune which governs the world, and upon those passions which elsewhere he had with agitating pathos to depict. As Romeo, the gentleman, is *the* unlucky man of Shakespeare, so here does he exhibit Bottom, the blockhead, as *the* lucky man, as him on whom Fortune showers her favors beyond measure.

This is the part of the character which can not be performed. It is here that the greatest talent of the actor must fail in answering the demand made by the author upon our imagination. The utmost lavish of poetry, not only of high conception, but of the most elaborate working in the musical construction of the verse, and a somewhat recondite searching after all the topics favorable to the display of poetic eloquence in the ornamental style, is employed in the description of the fairy scenes and those who dwell therein. Language more brilliantly bejewelled with whatever tropes and figures rhetoricians catalogue in their books is not to be found than what is scattered forth with copious hand in Midsummer Night's Dream.* The compliment to Queen Elizabeth,

* Dr. Ulrici, who employs many words to look at Midsummer Night's

"In maiden meditation fancy-free,"

was of necessity sugared with all the sweets that the *bon-bon* box of the poet could supply; but it is not more ornamented than the passages all around. The pastoral images of Corin

"Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phillida;"

the homely consequence resulting from the fairy quarrel,

"The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard;
The fold stands empty in the drownéd field,
And crows are fatted with the murrain flock;"

and so on, are ostentatiously contrasted with misfortunes more metaphorically related:—

"We see
The seasons alter; hoary-headed frosts
Fall on the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hyems' chin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set."

The mermaid chanting on the back of her dolphin; the fair vestal throned in the west; the bank blowing with wild thyme, and decked with oxlip and nodding violet; the roundelay of the fairies singing their queen to sleep; and a hundred images besides of aërial grace and mythic beauty, are showered upon us; and in the midst of these splendors is tumbled in Bottom, the Weaver, blockhead by original formation, and rendered doubly ridiculous by his partial change into a literal jackass.

Dream, "in an artistic and æsthetical point of view," simply considers that, in this composition, Shakespeare had merely looked upon Life itself simply as a sort of dream. Generalizing on the characters, he says, that they are drawn, "in keeping with the pervading idea, with a few fine touches, and without depth of shade in a vanishing chiaro-scuro. All are equally full of feeling and fancy, conceit and humor; some are light and trifling, some sentimental dreamers, or, like Bottom and his companions, replete with amusing absurdities."—M.

He, the most unfitted for the scene of all conceivable personages, makes his appearance, not as one to be expelled with loathing and derision, but to be instantly accepted as the chosen lover of the Queen of the Fairies. The gallant train of Theseus traverse the forest, but they are not the objects of such fortune. The lady, under the oppression of the glamour cast upon her eyes by the juice of love-in-idleness, reserves her raptures for an absurd clown. Such are the tricks of Fortune.

Oberon himself, angry as he is with the caprices of his queen, does not anticipate any such object for her charmed affections. He is determined that she is to be captivated by "some vile thing," but he thinks only of

> "Ounce, or cat, or bear,
> Pard, or boar with bristled hair,"

animals suggesting ideas of spite or terror; but he does not dream that, under the superintendence of Puck, spirit of mischief, she is to be enamored of the head of an ass surmounting the body of a weaver. It is so nevertheless; and the love of the lady is as desperate as the deformity of her choice. He is an angel that wakes her from her flowery bed; a gentle mortal, whose enchanting note wins her ear, while his beauteous shape enthralls her eye; one who is as wise as he is beautiful; one for whom all the magic treasures of the fairy kingdom are to be with surpassing profusion dispensed. For him she gathers whatever wealth and delicacies the Land of Faëry can boast. Her most airy spirits are ordered to be kind and courteous to this *gentleman*—for into that impossible character has the blindness of her love transmuted the clumsy and conceited clown. Apricocks and dewberries, purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries, are to feed his coarse palate; the thighs of bees, kindled at the eyes of fiery glow-worms, are to light him to his flower-decked bed; wings plucked from painted butterflies are to fan the moonbeams from him as he sleeps; and in the

very desperation of her intoxicating passion she feels that there is nothing which should not be yielded to the strange idol of her soul. She mourns over the restraints which separate her from the object of her burning affection, and thinks that the moon and the flowers participate in her sorrow.

> "The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,
> And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
> *Lamenting some enforced chastity.*"

Abstracting the poetry, we see the same thing every day in the plain prose of the world. Many is the Titania driven by some unintelligible magic so to waste her love. Some juice, potent as that of Puck—the true Cupid of such errant passions—often converts in the eyes of woman the grossest defects into resistless charms. The lady of youth and beauty will pass by the attractions best calculated to captivate the opposite sex, to fling herself at the feet of age or ugliness. Another, decked with graces, accomplishments, and the gifts of genius, and full of all the sensibilities of refinement, will squander her affections on some good-for-nothing *roué*, whose degraded habits and pursuits banish him far away from the polished scenes which she adorns. The lady of sixteen quarters will languish for him who has no arms but those which nature has bestowed; from the midst of the gilded *salon* a soft sigh may be directed toward the thin-clad tenant of a garret; and the heiress of millions may wish them sunken in the sea if they form a barrier between her and the penniless lad toiling for his livelihood,

> "Lord of his presence, and no land beside."

Fielding has told us all this in his own way, in a distich (put, I believe, into the mouth of Lord Grizzle; but, as I have not the illustrious tragedy* in which it appears, before me, I am not

* Fielding's Tragical History of Tom Thumb the Great.—M.

certain, and must therefore leave it to my readers to verify this important point). Love

> "Lords into cellars bears,
> And bids the brawny porter walk up stairs."

Tom Thumb and Midsummer Night's Dream preach the one doctrine. It would be amusing to trace the courses of thought by which the heterogeneous minds of Fielding and Shakespeare came to the same conclusion.

Ill-mated loves are generally but of short duration on the side of the nobler party, and she awakes to lament her folly. The fate of those who suffer like Titania is the hardest. The man who is deprived of external graces of appearance may have the power of captivating by those of the mind: wit, polish, fame, may compensate for the want of youth or personal attractions. In poverty or lowly birth may be found all that may worthily inspire devoted affection—

> "The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that."

In the very dunghill of dissipation and disgrace will be raked up occasionally a lurking pearl or two of honorable feeling, or kind emotion, or irregular talent, which may be dwelt upon by the fond eye, wilfully averting its gaze from the miserable mass in which they are buried. But woe unto the unhappy lady who, like Titania, is obliged to confess, when the enchantment has passed by, that she was "enamored of an *ass!*" She must indeed "loathe his visage," and the memory of all connected with him is destined ever to be attended by a strong sensation of disgust

But the ass himself of whom she was enamored has not been the less a favorite of Fortune, less happy and self-complacent, because of her late repentance. He proceeds onward as luckily as ever. Bottom, during the time that he attracts the attentions

of Titania, never for a moment thinks there is any thing extraordinary in the matter. He takes the love of the Queen of the Fairies as a thing of course, orders about her tiny attendants as if they were so many apprentices at his loom, and dwells in Fairy Land unobservant of its wonders, as quietly as if he were still in his workshop. Great is the courage and self-possession of an ass-head. Theseus would have bent in reverent awe before Titania. Bottom treats her as carelessly as if she were the wench of the next-door tapster. Even Christopher Sly,* when he finds himself transmuted into a lord, shows some sign of astonishment. He does not accommodate himself to surrounding circumstances. The first order he gives is for a pot of small ale; and after all the elegant luxuries of his new

* In comparing the characters of Sly and Bottom, we must be struck with the remarkable profusion of picturesque and classical allusions with which both these buffoons are surrounded. I have quoted some of the passages from Midsummer Night's Dream above. The Induction to the Taming of the Shrew is equally rich. There, too, we have the sylvan scenery and the cheerful sport of the huntsman, and there we also have references to Apollo and Semiramis; to Cytherea all in sedges hid; to Io as she was a maid; to Daphne roaming through a thorny wood. The coincidence is not casual. Shakespeare desired to elevate the scenes in which such grovelling characters played the principal part by all the artificial graces of poetry, and to prevent them from degenerating into mere farce. As I am on the subject, I can not refrain from observing that the remarks of Bishop Hurd on the character of the Lord in the Induction to the Taming of the Shrew are marked by a ridiculous impertinence, and an ignorance of criticism truly astonishing. They are made to swell, however, the strange farrago of notes gathered by the variorum editors. The next editor may safely spare them.

I have not troubled my readers with verbal criticism in this paper, but I shall here venture on one conjectural emendation. Hermia, chiding Demetrius, says, Act III. Scene 2,

> "If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
> Being o'er shoes in blood, wade in *the* deep,
> And kill me too."

Should we not read "*knee* deep?" As you are already over your shoes, wade on until the bloody tide reaches your knees. In Shakespeare's time *knee* was generally spelt *kne;* and between *the* and *kne* there is not much difference in writing.—W. M.

situation have been placed ostentatiously before him — after he has smelt sweet savors, and felt soft things — after he begins to think he is

"A lord indeed,
And not a tinker nor Christopher[o] Sly;"

even then nature — or habit, which stands in the place of nature — recurs invincible, and once more he calls for a pot of the smallest ale. (I may again cite Fielding in illustration of Shakespeare; for do we not read, in the Covent Garden tragedy, of the consolation that

"Cold small beer is to the waking drunkard;"

and do we not hear the voice of Christopher Sly praying, for God's sake, in the midst of his lordly honors, for a draught of that unlordly but long-accustomed beverage?) In the Arabian Nights' Entertainments a similar trick is played by the Caliph Haroun Al-raschid upon Abou Hassan, and he submits, with much reluctance, to believe himself the Commander of the Faithful. But having in vain sought how to explain the enigma, he yields to the belief, and then performs all the parts assigned to him, whether of business or pleasure, of counsel or gallantry, with the easy self-possession of a practised gentleman. Bottom has none of the scruples of the tinker of Burton-heath, or the *bon vivant* of Bagdad. He sits down amid the fairies as one of themselves without any astonishment; but so far from assuming, like Abou Hassan, the manners of the court where he has been so strangely intruded, he brings the language and bearing of the booth into the glittering circle of Queen Titania. He would have behaved in the same manner on the throne of the caliph, or in the bedizened chamber of the lord; and the ass-head would have victoriously carried him through.

Shakespeare has not taken the trouble of working out the conclusion of the adventure of Sly; and the manner in which it is finished in the old play where he found him, is trifling and common-place. The Arabian novelist repeats the jest upon

his hero, and concludes by placing him as a favorite in the court of the amused caliph. This is the natural ending of such an adventure; but, as Bottom's was supernatural, it was to conclude differently. He is therefore dismissed to his ordinary course of life, unaffected by what has passed. He admits at first that it is wonderful, but soon thinks it is nothing more than a fit subject for a ballad in honor of his own name. He falls at once to his old habit of dictating, boasting, and swaggering, and makes no reference to what has happened to him in the forest. It was no more than an ordinary passage in his daily life. Fortune knew where to bestow her favors.*

Adieu then, Bottom, the Weaver! and long may you go onward prospering in your course! But the prayer is needless, for you carry about you the infallible talisman of the ass-head. You will be always sure of finding a Queen of the Fairies to heap her favors upon you, while to brighter eyes and nobler natures she remains invisible or averse. Be you ever the chosen representative of the romantic and the tender before dukes and princesses; and if the judicious laugh at your efforts, despise them in return, setting down their criticism to envy. This you have a right to do. Have they, with all their wisdom and wit, captivated the heart of a Titania as you have done? Not they—nor will they ever. Prosper, therefore, with undoubting heart despising the rabble of the wise. Go on your path rejoicing; assert loudly your claim to fill every character in life; and you may be quite sure that as long as the noble race of the Bottoms continues to exist, the chances of extraordinary good luck will fall to their lot, while in the ordinary course of life they will never be unattended by the plausive criticism of a Peter Quince.

* Thomas Campbell, the poet, in his notice of the Midsummer Night's Dream, suggests how Shakespeare "must have chuckled and laughed in the act of placing the ass's head on Bottom's shoulders! He must have foretasted the mirth of generations unborn, at Titania's doating on the metamorphosed weaver, and on his calling for a repast of sweet peas."—M.

No. V.—TIMON OF ATHENS.

The story of Timon the Misanthrope was popular not only in his native land of Greece, but in the English literature of the Middle Ages. Classical readers, who are of course acquainted with the lively dialogue of Lucian, were once apt to look upon the philosopher of Samosata as affording the original of the play of Shakespeare; but I doubt if Lucian, though familiar to the learned, was popularly known even at the end of the sixteenth century in England. Shakespeare was indebted for the hint, and the principal incidents of his drama, to Plutarch, translated from the French of Amyot, by Sir Thomas North, and to Paynter's "Palace of Pleasure."* Dr. Farmer, in his very

* Ulrici declares Timon of Athens to be "unquestionably one of the last tragedies of our poet; in all probability the very last," which come down to us unfinished, and argues that it could not have been written before 1602. It can not be established, as is the case with Othello, that it was ever acted in the lifetime of the author. It was first printed in the folio edition of 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death. Malone fixes 1610 as the probable date when it came from his pen, and, Charles Knight says, "we know of no extrinsic evidence to confirm or contradict this opinion." Coleridge (who characterizes it as "a bitter dramatized satire") affirms that it belongs, with Lear and Macbeth, to the last epoch of the Poet's life, when the period of beauty was past, and "that of *Leinotés* and grandeur succeeds." He designates it, also, as "an after vibration of Hamlet;" but it is remarked by Verplanck that the sad morality of Hamlet is, like the countenance of the Royal Dane, "more in sorrow than in anger;" while that of Timon is fierce, angry, caustic, and vindictive. It is, therefore (he says), "that, instead of being considered as an after vibration of Hamlet, it would be appropriately described as a solemn prelude, or a lingering echo, to the

shallow and pretending "Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare," announces this important fact among others equally important, with much flourish; and those who feel inclined for such inquiries, will find sufficient to satisfy their curiosity in the voluminous notes gathered by the industry of Malone, Steevens, and Boswell.

To use the phrase of Dr. Farmer, which immediately succeeds his notice of Timon, "were this a proper place for such a disquisition," I should have something to say, not merely on the learning of Shakespeare—a point on which I differ exceedingly with the Master of Emanuel*—but on the utility of learning to a dramatist. I should be prepared to contend, that though the greater the store of knowledge, no matter whence derived—from books, from observation, from reflection—possessed by a writer on any subject, and the larger the field whence an author of works of imagination can cull or compare, so much more copious will be his sources of thought, illustration, ornament, and allusions; yet that the dramatist, and indeed the poet in general (the exceptions are few, and easily

wild passion of Lear." Hallam also assigns it to the later years of Shakespeare, when he wrote as "the stern censurer of mankind." As to the origin of this drama, Knight agrees with a theory suggested by Dr. Farmer, that there existed some earlier popular play of which Timon was the hero, and that in the version we now possess, little more than the character of Timon really owns Shakespeare as author. Such a play there is, and it was lately printed in England, to show how little, if indeed any thing, Shakespeare drew from it. From Paynter's "Palace of Pleasure," Shakespeare may have derived the story, aided by Sir Thomas North's English translation of Lucian, in which it first appeared. There also was a Latin version of Lucian, as well as one in Italian (by Lonigo), which Shakespeare might have used—if he did not read Greek.—M.

* This paper was published in *Bentley's Miscellany* for March, 1838. In the following year, appeared, in *Fraser's Magazine*, Dr. Maginn's able and erudite papers on Dr. Farmer's "Essays on the Learning of Shakespeare." These comments, which fully discuss Shakespeare's claims to be considered other than a man with "little Latin and less Greek," form part of the present volume.—M.

accounted for), should not travel far out of the ordinary and beaten path for the main staple and material of his poem. Without immediately referring to the question of classical learning, many reasons exist for thinking that Richard the Third was not so deformed either in mind or body as he is represented in the two plays in which he appears in Shakespeare, or in the single one into which they are both somewhat clumsily rolled for the stage; but popular opinion, and the ordinary chronicles of the times, so represented him. Northern antiquaries are generally of opinion that Macbeth was the true king, and that the blood-stained mantle of cruelty and oppression ought to be shifted to the shoulders of the "gracious Duncan," who was in reality the usurper. In like manner we can conceive that if the authorities of Saxo-Grammaticus or Geoffry of Monmouth could be hunted up, a different coloring might be given to the tales of Hamlet or Lear. But what is all this to the purpose? It is no part of the duty of the dramatist to invade the province of the antiquary or the critic; and yet, for confining himself to his proper department, he incurs the censure of Farmer, and other persons of the same calibre of intellect. If Shakespeare had had all the concentrated knowledge of all the antiquarian societies of Denmark, Scotland, Norway, or Wales, he would have completely forgotten, what it was utterly impossible *he* should forget — the first principles of dramatic art, if he depicted Macbeth, Lear, or Hamlet, in any other manner than that which he has chosen. He would not have taken the trouble, even if editions of Saxo-Grammaticus or Hector Boethius were as plenty as blackberries, to turn over a single page of their folios. He found all that his art wanted in the historians or romance-writers of the day — in Hall or Holinshed, or the "Tragical History of Hamblet," and that, too, translated, not from the Latin of the Danish annalist, but from the French of the story-teller Belleforest. Common sense would dictate this course;

but if the learned language be wanted to support it, I may quote Horace, who, being eminently the poet of common sense, speaks for all times and countries.

> Rectiùs Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
> Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus.

Take the tale or the legend as it is popularly believed for the foundation of your drama, and leave to others the obscure glory of hunting after new lights, or unheard-of adventures.

In his classical plots the same principal holds. In his Anthony and Cleopatra, Julius Cæsar, Coriolanus, and Timon of Athens, "it is notorious," to use the words of Dr. Farmer, "that much of his *matter-of-fact* knowledge is deduced from Plutarch; but in what language he read him, hath yet been the question." A more idle question could not have been asked. He might, for any thing we know to the contrary, have *read* him in Greek; but for dramatic purposes he *used* him in English. Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch was a remarkably popular book; and Shakespeare, writing not for verbal critics, anxiously collating the version with the original, and on the look-out to catch slips of the pen or mistakes of the press,* but for the ordinary frequenters of the theatre, consulted

* Such as *Lydia* for *Libya*, in Anthony and Cleopatra. Act III., sc. 6,

> "——— made her
> Of Lower Syria, Cyprus, *Lydia*,
> Absolute queen."

Upton, correcting it from the text of Plutarch, substituted *Libya;* and Dr. Johnson and other commentators adopted the correction. Farmer had the great merit of discovering that the word is *Lydia* in North, whom Shakespeare followed. It was a great shame indeed that he had not noticed the error, and collated the English with the Greek! In the same spirit of sagacious criticism it is remarked, that Cæsar is made to leave to the Roman people his gardens, &c., on *this* side Tiber," whereas it should be, "on *that* side Tiber" the original being ὠέραν τοῦ ποταμοῦ. North translates it, however, "on *this* side," and Shakespeare again follows him without turning to the Greek. Farmer, with an old rhetorical artifice, says, "I could furnish you with many more instances, but these are as good as a thousand." He bids us "turn to

the volume of the English knight, not that of the Bœotian biographer. If he had been as learned as Isaac Casaubon, he would have acted precisely in the same manner. The minute

the translation from the French of Amyot, by Thomas North, in folio, 1579, and you will at once see the *origin* of the mistake." It is hard to say in what sense Farmer uses the word "origin;" but the mistakes originate in Amyot, who translates the former passage, "Royne d'Egypte, de Cypre, de *Lydie*," and the latter, "et qu'il laissoit au peuple des jardins et vergers *deca* la rivière du Tybre." I agree with Farmer, however, in thinking that, if he could adduce the thousand instances of which he speaks, his argument would be nothing the better. It would only prove that Shakespeare, for the purposes of his plays, consulted North in English, and not Plutarch in Greek; a fact which may be readily conceded, and, as I have said in the text, completely justified on the true principles of the drama.

I do not agree with Upton and others in their proposed alteration of these two passages, which, however they may differ from the text of Plutarch, I would suffer to remain as they appear in the folio, because I am sure that Shakespeare so wrote them. Of the third, referred to by Dr. Farmer, I am not so clear. In Antony and Cleopatra, Act IV., sc. 1, Augustus, in reply to Antony's challenge, says:—

"Let the old ruffian know
I have many other ways to die — meantime,
Laugh at his challenge."

"What a reply is this!" says Upton; "it is acknowledging he should fall under the unequal combat. But if we read,

'Let the old ruffian know
He hath many other ways to die: meantime,
I laugh at his challenge,'

we have the poignancy and the very repartee of Cæsar to Plutarch." To this reading, which has been generally adopted, Dr. Farmer objects that, though it is certainly so in the Greek and the modern translation, "Shakespeare was misled by the ambiguity of the old one." Antonius sent again to challenge Cæsar to fight him, to which Cæsar answered, "That *he* had many other ways to die." The Doctor ought to have told us that the ambiguity here proceeded from Amyot: "Cæsar luy fit response, qu'*il* avoit beaucoup d'autres moyens de mourir que celuy-la;" but it is not an ambiguity of a very puzzling kind. It appears to me that Shakespeare would have followed his text literally as usual, and borrowed the word "*he*." I am, therefore, in favor of Upton's reading; especially as it mends the metre, which, in the present text, is somewhat out of joint:—

"Cæsar to Antony. Let the old ruffian know
I have many other ways to die — meantime,
Laugh at his challenge.
Mæc. Cæsar must think," &c.

and unceasing study of classical literature since the days of Shakespeare has banished blunders from our editions and translations, and not even the most carelessly educated would deem it pedantic or misplaced in a dramatist to write with a constant reference to the original, no matter in what language, from which he drew his story; but, on the other hand, we should deem him a very dull critic indeed who would insist upon it that in a play avowedly written after Hooke, or Gibbon, or Mitford, its author should verify every quotation, and take care that their authorities were given with all the perfections of the last "editio aliis longe locupletior."

Ben Jonson took another course, and his success was as indifferent as that of Shakespeare was overwhelming. His Sejanus and Cataline are treasures of learning. Gifford truly says of the latter, that "the number of writers whom Jonson has consulted, and the industry and care with which he has extracted from them every circumstance conducive to the elucidation of his plot, can only be conceived by those who have occasion to search after his authorities. He has availed himself of almost every scattered hint from the age of Sallust to that of Elizabeth for the correct formation of his characters, and placed them before our eyes as they appear in the writings of those who lived and acted with them." The consequence is, that Catiline is absolutely unbearable on the stage, and fails to please in the closet, because the knowledge with which it abounds is conveyed in an inappropriate form. If Jonson had bestowed the same pains, and expended the same learning, upon a history of the Catilinarian conspiracy, he might have produced a historical treatise to be applauded, instead of a tra-

The proposed reading would make it much smoother:—

"Cæsar to Antony. Let the old ruffian
Know he hath many other ways to die:
Meantime, I laugh at's challenge.
Mæc. Cæsar must think," &c. — W. M.

gedy to be at most but tolerated. His learning oppressed him. He was too full of knowledge to borrow his plots, not to say from North, but from Plutarch himself. The inaccuracies of the old story-teller would have constantly shocked his scholar-like mind; and, instead of drawing characters or inventing situations, he would have been in perpetual quest of authorities to corroborate or contradict his principal text. Had there been any such thing as a Plutarchian life of Catiline, or "a Tragical History of the bloody conspiracy of Rome, showing how they swore upon a bowl of blood to burn the town and murder the senators; with the particulars of the execution of some of the conspirators, and the killing of the rest in a bloody battle near unto the Italian mountains called the Alps," the subject might have attracted the attention of Shakespeare, who would have assuredly looked no farther. The gossipping biographer or the prating ballad-monger would suffice for his purpose; and all other authors, from the age of Sallust to that of Elizabeth, might rest unconsulted in peace. We should, however, have had characters which, if they were not as correctly formed, "and placed before our eyes as they appear in the *writings* of those who lived and acted with them," would have been placed before us as they appeared in the eyes of the men themselves who saw them live and act. He would not have dressed up the dry-bones of history, skeleton-fashion; but clothed them with flesh, and sent upon the stage, not critical abstractions, but actual men. It is usual to talk of the art of Jonson as something opposed to the genius of Shakespeare. With deference to those who employ this language, it is not over wise. In every thing material the possession of genius includes the possession of art; and in their common pursuit it would be easy to prove that Jonson was as much inferior in dramatic art, as it is admitted he was in dramatic genius, to his illustrious contemporary. I am much mistaken if I could not support my opinion by the authority of

no less a person than Aristotle himself, of whom Jonson thought so highly as to write a commentary on his Poetics. I do not say this out of any disparagement of that great writer, whose name, on many accounts, stands eminently high for erudition and genius in our own, as it would in any other literature, and whose memory was shamefully used by some of the Shakespearian commentators of the last century; but I refer to him because the acknowledged failure of his learned dramas affords, in my mind, a full justification of the course pursued by Shakespeare, and ought to put an end to the idle gabble as to the learning of him whom Dr. Farmer so complacently calls "the old bard." But the full discussion of this question, with the numberless incidental disquisitions to which it must give rise, would occupy too large a space to be ventured upon in these fleeting essays; and might make the readers of *Bentley's Miscellany* set me down, if its editor were rash enough to inflict such toil upon them, as a bore of the first magnitude for intruding my dry criticisms upon his pleasant and festive pages. I am rather afraid that they are something inclined to think me so already, and am unwilling farther to jeopard my reputation on that score. I must confine myself to Timon.

Lucian introduces Timon after his fall from riches, besieging Jupiter with a storm of epithets, and railing at the dotage into which the god has fallen, and his imbecility in permitting so much evil in the world. He reminds him of the former times, in which his lightning and thunder were in constant occupation; when his ægis was perpetually shaken, his bolts darted like clouds of arrows, his hail rattled down as through a sieve; and how once on a great occasion he drowned the world in a universal deluge, leaving but a spark of life behind in a cockboat stranded upon Lycorea for the propagation of greater wickedness. After some general reflections, he comes to his own particular case, and upbraids the god for allowing him to

be treated with so much ingratitude, especially as he had so often sacrificed at the jovial festivals with so much liberality. His clamors succeed in arresting the attention of Jupiter, who had been scared away for some time from looking into Athens by the noisy disputes of the philosophers; and, recognising his claims on divine attention, he despatches Mercury to find Plutus, and bring him to Timon in the desert. The messenger of the gods willingly undertakes the commission; and a pleasant dialogue between him and Plutus, on the difficulty of keeping or retaining wealth, the difference its possession and its want makes in the human character, and other similar topics, ensues. Plutus is soon introduced to Timon, drives away Poverty, and defends himself against the accusations of the misanthrope, by referring to his own reckless extravagance, and want of discrimination in the choice of associates. Recommending Timon to dig vigorously, he departs. The digging is abundantly successful. It turns up gold in countless quantities, and presently arrive troops of flatterers, allured by the mere smell of the metal. Some who have treated him with remarkable ingratitude are among the number, and Timon resolves on vengeance. As one by one they approach—some under pretence that their visits were paid for the sake of doing him service, others promising him public honors and dignities—he assaults them with his spade, and sends them home battered and broken-headed. At last the visitors become too numerous for this close combat; and determined, like the old man in the story, to try what virtue is in stones, he commences a battery upon them, which soon compels them to retreat, but "not," as Timon says, in the concluding sentence of the dialogue, "bloodless or unwounded."

Such is a hasty sketch of what is generally looked upon to be one of the most finished compositions of Lucian. The style throughout is gay and airy (though somewhat hampered by its mythology, for Plutus is made to bear the incompatible charac-

ters of the god of Gold, and of gold itself, which every now and then comes in awkwardly), and the characters are pleasantly sketched. But Lucian nowhere reaches the height of the comic; and over tragic, or pathetic, or satire, in its loftier range, he has scarcely any power. The objects of his ridicule are comprised within a small compass. His readers may well exclaim with Lord Byron, "Oh! thou eternal Homer!" for he can scarcely write two pages without some jeering reference to the Iliad or Odyssey, the spirit of which divine poems he did not in the slightest degree comprehend. The wranglings of the sophists among whom he lived, and to which he attached a wonderful importance, form another topic of which he is never tired. Sketches of Athenian manners and society abound, often graphic, but perpetually filled with complaints of the insolence and upstart pride of the rich. He is always on the watch to remind them of the transitory nature of their possessions! and to condemn them to insult and disgrace at the hands of the poorer classes, whom they had treated with *hauteur* during life, when they descend to another world. He repeats in several places the comparison of life to a theatrical procession, in which magnificent parts are assigned to some, who pass before the eyes of the spectators clothed in costly garments, and bedecked with glittering jewels; but, the moment the show is over, are reduced to their original nothingness, no longer kings and heroes, but poor players whose hour has been strutted out. It gives him wonderful pleasure to call Crœsus, and Midas, and the other generous princes of old times on the Asiatic coast, whose names are everlastingly hacked to pieces in the commonplace satires, or squibs, or homilies of the Greeks, wretches and offscourings; and to exhibit Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, occupied in degrading tasks in the infernal regions. These topics, with perpetual sneers at the then tumbling mythology of Paganism, almost exclusively occupy the pages of Lucian.

His vein of satire was small, and its direction not elevated. It is easy to see that petty feelings of personal spite or envy are at the bottom of all he writes. He was jealous of the attention paid to wealth, and anxious to show the world its mistake in not bestowing exclusive homage on those far superior persons who could write witty dialogue, sparkling *persiflage*, or smart reviews. In the sketch which is called his Life, he lets us into the secret. His father was anxious to make him a sculptor, and apprenticed him to an uncle, who had obtained some reputation as an artist. His uncle treated him harshly, and he took a dislike to the business. He then tells us of his dream, in which the Godesses of Art and Eloquence contended for him; and, after hearing the pleadings of both, he decided for the latter. The argument which weighed most with him, was, the power conferred by a successful career on a public orator of assuming the port and insolence of the great. I doubt not that Lucian in his prosperous circumstances—it is said that he died Procurator, *i. e.*, Lord-Lieutenant, of Egypt*—was fully as arrogant, and as sensible of all the privileges of his position, as the most swelling and presumptuous of those whom he belabors in his Dialogues. Swift said that he wrote for no other reason than that he might be treated as if he were a lord; Lucian's ambition for literary renown was stimulated by the hope that he might treat others in what he conceived to be lordly fashion. In other respects the game he pursues is, in general, small. Living in the pestilential atmosphere of a literary town, he thought the squabbling and quibbling of the pedagogues, by whom he was surrounded, things of vital moment. It was, in his eyes, matter well worthy of all the satirical powers he possessed, to quiz the slovenly dress, or the quack

* In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Lucian was made Procurator of the province of Egypt, and died in the reign of Commodus, 80 or 90 years old. —M.

pretensions, of a set of poor devils whose very names must have been unknown beyond the narrow precincts in which they bustled. Greece, in his days, could not boast of any productions of genius; the commentating and criticising age had come; and the classics of bygone times were the subject of everlasting chatter among sects of reviewers anxious to show off their own wit and cleverness. The country had for ages ceased to take any interest in politics; and nothing remained to console national vanity but perpetual declamations on Marathon and Salamis, and vaporings about their skirmishing and buccaneering wars against the Persians. Philip, and his "god-like son," were, for many reasons which I need not stop to recapitulate, no favorites with the scribbling tribes of fallen Greece, and in general they make their appearance only for some such silly purpose as—

"To point a moral, and adorn a tale."

Of the events which occurred in the four or five centuries which elapsed from the death of Alexander to the days of Lucian, no notice is taken. We have scarcely a hint, except in one or two essays of dubious authenticity, of the existence and progress of Christianity, which was with relentless hand knocking to pieces those gods who were so often made the butts of Lucian's ineffective jesting. If there remained to us nothing but his writings, we should be ignorant almost of the existence of the great Roman empire under which he lived. His vision is confined to the gossip of Athens; what he sees there, he depicts with a pleasant and faithful hand; his world is that of sophists and reviewers, and on their concerns he is shrewd, witty, and instructive. Nothing in its style can be better, for example, than the Cobbler and the Cock; but the manners there depicted, and the foibles satirized, are trifling. The Art of writing History is a perfect model of a review; but then it is no more than a review. The Auction of Slaves is a capital

squib; but nothing more than a squib. He has often been compared to Rabelais, who has sometimes borrowed largely from him; (Epistemon's account of what he saw in the other world, for example, is taken not only in conception, but in many of its details, from the Necyomantia of Lucian;) but those who know how to read the Gargantua and Pantagruel in the manner recommended by Rabelais himself, in his address to the "beuveurs trez illustres," and the others to whom he dedicates his writing, will appreciate the deep difference between a light and sparkling wit, amusing himself with off-hand pleasantries on literary folly or provincial absurdity, and the long-pondering old man filled with omnigenous knowledge, rioting in bitter-souled buffoonery over all that can effect the interests or agitate the passions of mankind. Compare Lucian's True History, with the Voyage of Panurge in quest of the Holy Bottle. The Greek has the merit of the original idea, which has since suggested all other imaginary voyages, and supplied no few materials to Gulliver himself, and a pleasant history it must indeed be allowed to be; but what is it after all, but a quiz or parody (often an unfair one) on Herodotus and Homer! In the other, literature and its concerns hold but a trifling place; but as the vessel, steered by Xenomanes, glides onward through allegoric lands, and prodigious adventures, to its final destination, it leaves untouched no coast where matter is to be found for reflections on law, religion, medicine, science, politics, philosophy, in all their ramifications, poured forth from a bosom filled with unbounded erudition, and a heart perfectly fearless of those to whom it could trace superstition, imposture, quackery, or corruption.

I have dwelt perhaps too long — certainly longer than I had intended — on Lucian; but I wish to point out the inutility of looking to him, even if he had been at Shakespeare's elbow, as supplying in any degree elements for the character of the

dramatic Timon of Athens. *He* is the more energetic misanthrope. *He* indeed *hates* mankind. The Greek is not in earnest. In the depth of his indignation he turns away to jest upon some trifle of manners. He can recollect the ill-breeding and gluttony of the philosopher who licks up the rich sauce off the plate with his fingers; and he can stop to bandy jests with the hungry parasite, or the venal orator. His opening address to Jupiter, commences with a frolic recapitulation of the epithets addressed to the Olympian ruler by the poets; and the misanthrope is so far forgotten in the litterateur, that he pauses before entering on his own calamities and wrongs, to laugh at the brain-stricken poets who are obliged to stop the gap of a yawning rhythm, or to prop up a halting metre, by an epithet. This misanthropy did not very seriously affect the patient; nor are the evils of which he complains, amounting as they do to little more than his being cut by his old acquaintances now that he is poor, so dreadful or extraordinary as to make him

> "——— bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
> Or tell tales of them to high-judging Jove."

The wrath of the Timon of Shakespeare is conceived in a different spirit. No jesting escapes his lips while he hurls his hatred on Athens. His withering malediction touches all the points on which we are most sensitive; many, from the mere consideration of which we instinctively turn away. He prays for the incontinence of matrons, the disobedience of children, the degradation of nobles before slaves and fools, the foul desecration of virgins beneath the eyes of their parents, the bursting of all social bonds, the preternatural cruelty of boyhood to age:—

> "Son of sixteen,
> Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,
> And beat his brains out!"

The utter uprooting of all the civilized institutions, all the

charitable feelings, all the honorable or holy thoughts that link mankind together:—

> "Piety and fear,
> Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
> Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighborhood,
> Instruction, manners, mysteries and trades,
> Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
> Decline to your confounding contraries,
> And yet confusion live."

This is no mock hatred; it is the harrowing language of a man thoroughly aroused to indignation, and desperate against his kind. Compare it with the parallel passage of Lucian, and we shall see, without recurring to any such foolish inquiry as to what was the precise quantity of the "less Greek" allowed to Shakespeare by Ben Johnson, that to no other source than that which supplied the maledictions of Lear, or Constance, or Margaret, need we look for the bursting imprecations of Timon.

He is introduced, at the commencement of the play, surrounded with all the pomp and circumstances of profuse wealth. The poet, the painter, the jeweller, await his appearance with the tribute of the pen, the pencil, and the mine. The noblest men of this city bow before him, cap in hand; the humble look up to him as their surest stay in distress, and none depart disappointed. All conditions and all minds, the poet says in the florid style:—

> "As well of glib and slippery creatures * as
> Of grave and austere quality, tender down
> Their service to Lord Timon. His large fortune,
> Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
> Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
> All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer,
> To Apemantus, that few things loves better
> Than to abhor himself."

His first appearance on the stage is to release a prisoner by paying the debt; to give the dowry required to make two

* Should not this be "creature," *i. e.* creation?—W. M.

lovers happy in their union; to bestow lavish recompense, and, what is fully as dear to the ear of painter and poet, commendations equally lavish on the productions offered to his patronage; to receive with abounding hospitality Alcibiades and his train; to preside at a magnificent banquet, heaping his guests with gifts, and entertaining them with all the splendor that taste and prodigal expense can command. His own heart, proud and gratified, swells with a strong desire to do still more:—

> "Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends,
> And ne'er be weary."

He is happy in being the instrument of contributing to the happiness of others. It is his delight—his pleasure—his hobby. Not to be generous, is not to be himself. His profuse and liberal habit blinds him to all suspicions that the rest of the world is not of the same temper. The time comes when he is to be cruelly undeceived, and when his sincerity in these professions of universal love and benevolence is to be severely tested. His wealth, which he thought inexhaustible, has taken to itself wings and fled. But even this does not make any very deep impression upon him. He listens with characteristic impatience to the tale of his ruin told by the disconsolate Flavius. He answers in brief and hasty sentences, and soon bids him "sermon no further." He has his own resources left, his own plans to fall back upon. He remembers his wish when in the height of imagined prosperity; he had often desired to be poorer, in order that he might come nearer his friends. He had been affected even to tears when, with overflowing heart, he thought of the precious comfort of having so many persons knit together so closely, that, like brothers, they commanded each other's fortunes. He reflects with a justifiable pride, that his generosity was not directed to unworthy purposes, or called forth by unworthy feelings:—

"No villanous bounty yet hath past my heart;
Unwisely, not ignobly have I given."

He will not listen to the suggestions of his steward that he can find any difficulty in borrowing. Even when he learns that the senators, on whom he had public claims, and from whom he expected a large sum of money for the mere asking, have turned a deaf ear to applications made in his name, he is not discouraged. He utters a slight expression of spleen: "You gods reward them!" and at once bidding Flavius look cheerly, proceeds to account for their ingratitude as an exception to the general rule, arising from the lack of kindly warmth in cold-blooded age. Elsewhere he is secure of success:—

"——— Ne'er speak or think
That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink."

All these hopes are dashed to the ground in a moment. His attempts at borrowing are worse than unsuccessful; they make his difficulties notorious, and, instead of assisting his wants, cause his house to be besieged with clamorous creditors. Shakespeare has not written the scene in which the ungrateful refusals of his friends are communicated to him; but he shows us the effect of the communication on Timon's mind. It strikes him with instant sickness. "Take it on my soul," says his servant Servilius,

"My lord leans wondrously to discontent,
His comfortable temper has forsook him;
He is much out of health, and keeps his chamber."

This is the cold fit of the ague by which he is smitten. The hot fit of fever is soon at hand. He bursts in controlless rage through the files of opposing duns; plans a whimsical, but a decisive revenge; and, having executed it, parts from the crowd of

"Smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,

> The fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time-flies,
> Cap-and-knee slaves, vapors, and minute-jacks,"

whose prodigious ingratitude had driven him almost mad, with a stern resolution never more to expose himself to similar causes of grief and indignation, by herding again with mankind.

It is useless to say that such a determination was unjust. He who affects to be a misanthrope, is a pitiful and troublesome coxcomb; real misanthropy is madness, and in the concluding acts of the play, Timon is actually insane. He had no friends. His money and his dinners attracted dependants and guests in abundance; but he ought to have known that they went *for* the money and the dinner, and nothing else. The entertainer and the entertained were on a level. If they had the pleasure of receiving, he had the glory of giving, and neither party had a right to complain. The course of life he led, was calculated expressly to drive from him all who were possessed of qualities capable of inspiring respect and friendship. No honorable or high-minded man would frequent the house of Timon, to be exposed to the suspicion of going there with sordid or selfish views. He gathered around him throngs of people whom he corrupted into sycophancy, and he is unreasonable enough to complain of the very meanness which was chiefly of his own creation or encouragement. He set no value on what he flung away with lavish hand, and in reality cared as little for those to whom he flung it. While dispensing his boundless hospitalities, or scattering his magnificent gifts, he had in him, though undeveloped, and even by himself unsuspected, the seeds of misanthropy as deeply set as when he was howling against

> "All feasts, societies, and throngs of men,"

in the desert. He consulted merely his own whim in giving. He thought that no profusion could exhaust his wealth; and he therefore was profuse, as he imagined, in security. If we held the purse of Fortunatus, or could chain

> "Volatile Hermes, and call up unbound,
> In various forms, old Proteus from the sea,
> Drawn through a limbeck to his native form,"

and achieve the discovery of the philosopher's stone, where would be our merit in dispensing gold all around? We give nothing when we give that which cost us nothing. We do not see that Timon makes any sacrifice, or puts himself to any inconvenience; and we must esteem but lightly that liberality which looks forward to recompense our return. In his prosperity he cherished chance companions without consideration; and, with equal want of consideration, he curses all mankind in his adversity. The difference between his feelings in the two cases amounts to no more than this, that Timon, rich, quietly showed his contempt of the ill-chosen circle of parasites with which he had surrounded himself, by a careless bounty, showered without distinction on the base as on the worthy; and Timon, poor, clamorously exhibited his hatred of all mankind, hastily judging them by the wretched sample with which he had associated, in a strain of general imprecation as reckless and undiscriminating.

A servile or sensual mind would have adopted the plan of Gnatho in the Eunuchus, who, after he had wasted in "riotous living" whatever property he possessed — after *patria abligurierat bona* — seized on such a gull as Thraso, and have endeavored to live upon others, as others had lived upon him. A good-natured or thoughtless fellow would have tried to mend his luck, called for fresh cards, and begun again. He, no doubt, would be at first especially annoyed by the loss of his money, and still more by the reflection that he had been choused and ill-treated by those whom he took to be his friends, and who, at all events, were the partners of his gayer hours. But the fit would soon pass, the bile would be got rid of, and (if of English tongue), after a few of those national prayers which have

obtained us a celebrated *sobriquet* among all the other people of the earth, liberally distributed to all and sundry, he would regain his temper, and philosophically sing:—

> "Why should we quarrel for riches,
> Or other such glittering toys?
> A light heart and a thin pair of breeches
> Will go through the world, my brave boys!"

He would struggle on, and puzzle it out in one way or another; and, if Fortune smiled once more, be as ready as ever to commence the old game, forgetting and forgiving every thing and every body, and as open as before to be imposed upon by those who gave themselves the trouble to do so.

But Timon could not adopt either of these courses. Too highbred, too haughty of thought, he could never have descended to be a trencher-slave; too selfishly awake to his own importance, he could never have pardoned those who had hurt his pride, or mortified his vanity.

Such contrasts as these, Shakespeare had no notion of opposing to him. But he has chosen the appropriate contrast in Apemantus, the snarling philosopher,* who is modelled after the cynics, particularly after Diogenes. In Timon's prosperity, he haunts his entertainment for the purpose of indulging his impertinent humor of carping at the company he meets there. Like Diogenes himself, he is no more than an ill-mannered hound, who deserves perpetual kickings, and is tolerated only for his wit. It is a character easy to assume and to support, requiring nothing more than a sufficient stock of cool impudence and effrontery. Vanity is at the bottom. A desire to brazen out the inconveniences of low breeding and awkward manners,

* He is thus introduced at Timon's banquet. [Act I. Scene 2.] "Then comes, dropping after all, Apemantus discontentedly, *like himself*." There has been some deep criticism on these words; but, as they do not convey any very brilliant meaning, I incline to think the direction was: "Then comes, dropping after all, Apemantus discontentedly, *by* himself."—W. M.

and a love of notoriety, no matter how obtained, are enough to make a cynic. The well-known repartees of Plato and Aristippus set the character of Diogenes in its true light; we may be certain that Alexander, in their celebrated dialogue, looked upon him merely as a buffoon, tumbling about for his diversion in a peculiar fashion; but he was undoubtedly possessed of much wit and humor. The jesting of Apemantus is as plain-spoken and ill-natured, if not as good, as that of the famed tenant of the tub; and Timon keeps him at his table as an original—a sort of lion, who is as much a part of the diversion of the evening, as the masque of the Amazons, or the lofty strain of the hautboys. There are some touches of nature in the fellow, however; for he sees with regret the approaching downfall of his liberal host, and warns him against the consequences of the course he is pursuing, with a grumbling kindness.

His cynicism is not misanthropy; it is of the same stamp as that of the hero of a celebrated play, which its celebrated author intended as an exhibition of the feelings and propensities of a man-hater, and gave it accordingly the name of Le Misanthrope. It would be absurd to offer eulogies to Moliere, but it is undeniable that he has made a mistake in the title of his play. Alceste is a testy and fretful man; nothing more. There is none of the insane rage, and consequently none of the poetry, of the misanthrope about him. It is hard to say what puts him out of humor; and, indeed, he can hardly tell the reason, except that

> "Moi, je veux me fâcher, et ne veux point entendre."

When he comes to matters more specific, we find him repeating the complaints, almost the phrases, of Apemantus:—

> "Non: je ne puis souffrir cette lâche methode
> Qu' affectent la plupart de vos gens à-la-mode;

Et je ne hay rein tant que les contorsions
De tous ces grands faiseurs de protestations :"

or again :—

"Me yeux sont trop blessez ; et la cour et la ville
Ne m'offrant rien qu'objets à m'échauffer la bile,
J'entre en une humeur noire, en un chagrin profond,
Quand je vois vivre entre eux les hommes comme ils font.
Je ne trouve part-tout que lâche flaterie,
Qu'injustice, intrérêt, trahison, fourberie ;
Je ne puis plus tenir, j'enrage, et mon dessein
Est de rompre en visière à tout le genre humain."

It was hardly worth while to come to so desperate a determination for so small a cause. His friend Philinte may well say :—

"Je ne vois pas, moi, que le cas soit pendable."

Even Apemantus is of higher strain on the same subject of insincere politeness :—

"Aches contract and starve your supple joints!
That there should be small love 'mongst these sweet knaves.
And all this courtesy! The strain of man's bred out
Into baboon and monkey.

Who lives that's not
Depraved, and depraves? who dies, that bears
Not one spurn to their graves of their friend's gift?
I should fear, those that dance before me now
Would one day stamp upon me. It has been done;
Men shut their doors against a setting sun.

What a coil's here!
Serving of becks, and jutting out of bums!
I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums
That are given for them. Friendship's full of dregs;
Methinks, false hearts should never have sound legs.
Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on courtesies."

In this strain Apemantus is consistent throughout. Alceste is not. Oronte reads to him a silly sonnet, and le Misantrope is as careful of the usages of society in conveying his censure, as any of the flatterers he condemns. His disapproval is conveyed indirectly ; instead of saying at once that the verses are

sad trash, he veils his criticism under the pretence of its having been addressed to another :—

> "Mais, un jour, à quelqu'un dont je tairai le nom,
> Je disois," &c.

The treatment which the poet experiences from Apemantus is of a more decisive character. Alceste, besides, so far from having determined to break "en visière à tout le genre humain," is in love, and in love with a flirt of the first magnitude. He is desperately jealous of his rivals; and, instead of supporting his misanthropical character, is ready to defy them *à l'outrance* for laughing at him. A duellist, not a misanthrope, would have said :—

> "Par le sangbleu! messieurs, je ne croyois pas être
> Si plaisant que je suis."

He experiences all the usual vicissitudes of love—jealousy, anger, quarrels, reconciliations, and so forth. If we did not find it in the Misanthrope, we should be inclined to ascribe the following tender *morceau*—and there are more beside—to as love-smitten a swain as ever talked "softely to his ladye love."

Alceste says to Celimone :—

> "Ah! que vous sçavez bien ici contre moi-méme,
> Perfide! vous servir de ma foiblesse extrème,
> Et ménager pour vous l'excès prodigieux
> De ce fatal amour, né de vos traitres yeux!"

We find nothing like this, in the Misanthrope drawn by a more vigorous hand. Moliere himself seems to have a sharp misgiving as to the consistency of his character, for he makes Philinte say with astonishment :—

> "De l'humeur dont le Ciel a voulu le former,
> Je ne sçai pas comment il s'avise d'aimer."

He may indeed be well amazed; but it is also not a little to be wondered that the same consideration did not induce the author to choose a different title for his comedy.

The snarler living in society, and the furious man who has fled from it, meet in the wood. The scene which ensues, is the master-piece of the play. The contrast between the hardened practitioner in railing at mankind, the long-trained compound of impudent humorist and sturdy beggar, who never had felt an honorable or generous emotion, and whose whole career had been devoted to procure, under the cover of philosophy and independence, an inglorious living in lazy idleness, by amusing those whose taste lay that way with scurril ribaldry; and the man who, born in lofty rank, had enjoyed all the luxuries and the splendors of life, who had the mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and hearts of men paying homage to him, who had never bent for favor, save when he thought that he did honor to those of whom he asked it; and now deprived of all that had been his glory and happiness, the gods of his idolatry shattered at one blow, his brilliant sky suddenly overcast, and the rich and bright-colored rainbow reduced to its original mist and vapor; — the contrast between these — one content with his lot, and even vain of the position into which he has thrust himself; the other, torn by all the passions of anger and mortification — is finely conceived and admirably executed. Apemantus tells Timon that his present character springs only from change of fortune; that he is a fool to expose himself to the rigor of woods which have outlived the eagle, while his flatterers wear silk, drink wine, lie soft, and have forgotten his existence; that his sour cold habit has been put on enforcedly; that he would again be a courtier, if he were not a beggar; and, as a moral of his discourse, recommends him to imitate the practices of those who ruined him — to hinge his knee, crouch, flatter, and betray in turn;

> "'Tis most just
> That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,
> Rascals should have it."

Timon scarcely replies to the railing of the cynic, and utterly disdains to notice the scoundrel advice with which he concludes: but he retorts on his unwelcome visitor, that his character also was framed by his circumstances; that he was born a beggar, and bred a dog; that his nature commenced in sufferance, and that time made him hard in it; and that, if he had not been from the earliest moment of his life the most degraded of mankind, he would be a knave and flatterer. In these mutual censures there is a mixture of truth and injustice. That Timon's misanthropy was forced upon him by the downfall of his fortunes, and the faithlessness of his friends, is true; but Apemantus does not do him justice when he says, that he would return to his old mode of life, if he were to regain his former wealth. The iron has entered too deeply into his soul.* Nor has the cynic properly appreciated the character of Timon, when he recommends him to turn rascal. Here he speaks from himself, and is laid defenceless open to the powerful retort of the fallen gentleman. "Hadst thou," says Timon,

> "Like us, from our first swath, proceeded
> The sweet degrees that this brief world affords
> To such as may the passive drugs of it
> Freely command, thou would'st have plunged thyself
> In general riot; melted down thy youth
> In different beds of lust, and never learned
> The icy precepts of respect; but followed
> The sugared game before thee."

The same selfish mood of temper that rendered the beggar Apemantus insolent, and desirous of vexing whomsoever he met, "always a villain's office, or a fool's," would have made the highborn Apemantus pursue such a course as is here described

* Ulrici conjectures that Shakespeare's view of the world and things, even on its artistic side, must have been somewhat troubled in the latter years of his career. "No one," he says, "could have painted misanthropy with such truth and force without having at some time or other experienced its bitter agony."—M.

by Timon; and if he had brokon down in his career, there can scarcely be a doubt that he would have followed the servile advice he tenders. The beggared prodigal would have become a sycophant. But Timon, too, is unjust toward Apemantus when he says:—

"All villains that do stand by thee are pure;"

for the cynic had no other villany than impudence and idleness. The fact is, that neither can defend his own conduct, and each is driven to take the ground of impugning that of his accuser. Such a conversation can have but the one end. It must conclude, as it does here, in a torrent of mutual abuse; and they depart with increased scorn and contempt of each other.

With the fourth act, the Shakespearian Timon may be said to begin and end. The first act, exhibiting his prodigal extravagance; the second, his tottering estate; and the third, his mortification and revenge, are taken from Plutarch; or, if we must speak by the card, from North. There is nothing remarkable in the characters of a prodigal host, a confiding friend, or an irritated benefactor soured by unlooked-for ingratitude. The fourth act is Shakespeare's own. Alarm had made way for rage; rage now bursts into madness uncontrolled. In the other sketches of Timon, he is shown as a splenetic wit; and those who visit him in the hour of his returning wealth are no more than ordinary parasites, plying their well-understood vocation. In the fifth act Shakespeare dramatizes some of the old traditionary stories of the man-hater, and the force and energy which he had imparted to the character are immediately weakened. The invitation of all Athenians "the sequence of degree" to hang themselves, is a touch of mere comedy;* and

* Shakespeare, in introducing this story of the tree, did not take the trouble of recollecting that it is a town story, and not suited for the desert.

"I have a tree, which grows here in my close,

even his answers to the senators, though savage enough, are far removed from the intensity of frenzied hatred exhibited in the fourth act. There he is indeed the *misanthropos* who hates mankind. The poetry of the misanthropic feeling is there fully developed. In Apemantus, his hatred of mankind is a tolerated impertinence, which obtains admission to lordly tables, and affords an opportunity of railing and carping, without being exposed to their proper consequences. In Alceste, there is in reality no misanthropy at all, Philinte may well call it a folly:

> " C'est une folie, à nulle autre seconde,
> De vouloir se méler de corriger le monde,"

In Timon it is absolute madness. He goes not about displaying his wit or his ill-nature at the expense of those whom he meets. He flies from all society, and confounds the universal race of man in one common curse. As for correcting the world, he dreams not of such folly. It suits him better to pray for its universal ruin and damnation.*

> That mine own use invites me to cut down,
> And I must fell it."

He hardly had a close of his own, or indeed a tree of his own, in the desert, where he dwelt in a cave; besides, he had no necessity for felling any particular tree, or, if he had, there remained enough for the purposes he recommended.—W. M.

* Timon of Athens always appeared to us to be written with as intense a feeling of his subject as any one play of Shakespeare. It is one of the few in which he seems to be in earnest throughout, never to trifle nor go out of his way. He does not relax in his efforts, nor lose sight of the unity of his design. It is the only play of our author in which spleen is the predominant feeling of the mind. It is as much a satire as a play; and contains some of the finest pieces of invective possible to be conceived, both in the snarling, captious answers of the cynic Apemantus, and in the impassioned and more terrible imprecations of Timon. The latter remind the classical reader of the force and swelling impetuosity of the moral declamations of Juvenal, while the former have all the keenness and caustic severity of the old Stoic philosophers. The soul of Diogenes appears to have been seated on the lips of Apemantus. The churlish profession of misanthropy in the cynic is contrasted with the profound feeling of it in Timon, and also with the sol-

This is the only light in which misanthropy can be considered for the purposes of poetry. If we do not look upon it as madness, it becomes contemptible. Timon, born to great estate, wastes it in riotous living; and, when his money is gone, he finds it not quite so easy to borrow as it had been with him to lend. The case is far from being uncommon; and it is borne in different ways, according to the different temperaments of men. It drives Timon out of his senses. Gold, and the pomps and vanities which it procures, had been to him every thing. Nature had not supplied him with domestic attachments; he is without wife or children, kindred or relations, and he has made no friend. All that he regarded, vanished with his wealth. His soul, like that of the licentiate, Perez Garcia, lay in his purse;* when the purse was lost, he lost his senses too. In his prosperity we do not find any traces of affection, honorable or otherwise, for women. In his curses, disrespect for the female sex is remarkably conspicuous. The matron is a counterfeit, her smiling babe is spurious; the virgin is a traitor, there is no chastity which is not to be sacrificed for Gold, that

> "Ever young, fresh, loved, and delicate wooer,
> Whose blush does thaw the consecrated snow
> That lies on Dian's cheek;"

and those who do make the sacrifice are instantly converted into the plagues and torment of mankind. "There's more gold," he says to Phryne and Timandra, after a speech of frenzied raving;

> "Do you damn others, and let this damn you—
> And ditches grace you all!"

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dier-like and determined resentment of Alcibiades against his countrymen, who have banished him, though this forms only an incidental episode in the tragedy. The fable consists of a single event; — of the transition from the highest pomp and profusion of artificial refinement to the most abject state of savage life, and privation of all social intercouse.—Hazlitt.

* The reader will recollect the introduction to Gil Blas, in which Perez Garcia figures.—M.

These philosophical ladies assure him that they will do any thing for gold, and thank him for his compliments:—

"More counsel with more money, bounteous Timon!"

He readily believes them to be no worse than the rest of their sex; and, as gold has been his all-in-all, feels no scruple in thinking that its operation ought to be resistless in subverting the honor of women, as well as the faith of men. Nothing, I repeat, except insanity, could raise such a character from contempt; but invest him with madness, and poetry will always be able to rivet our attention, and excite our sympathies for the moody passions of the man hated of the gods, wandering alone over the limitless plain of life without end or object, devouring his own heart, and shunning the paths of men.

No women appear in this play except Phryne and Timandra, and they but in one short scene, when they do not speak, between them, fifty words. This, of itself, is sufficient to keep the play off the stage, for few actresses will be desirous of appearing in such characters. They are precisely the description of women suited to confirm Timon in his hatred of the human race, and his conviction of the power of money over all. It is unnecessary to say that ladies of a different class of soul are to be found in Shakespeare, but their place is not here. Isabels and Imogens, Juliets and Desdemonas, would have scorned the riot and sycophancy of his prosperous hours, and would have scared away by their unpurchaseable purity, the degrading visions of his misanthropical fancies in the wood. The mistresses of Alcibiades [the real Alcibiades, I should imagine, was much "better accommodated" than he appears to be in this play] are Timon's patterns of womankind; as the parasite train, who infested his house, are his patterns of mankind. Yet even he might have seen that his estimate was unjust. The churlish Apemantus, who ate roots while others revelled

at his overloaded board, seeks him in the forest to offer something better than roots to mend his feast. His steward, Flavius, approaches him in his calamity with a tender of his duteous service. Alcibiades, the most honored of his guests, and who never had received any favors at his hands, offers him assistance unasked. These touches of kindness might have abated his censure, and made him waver in his opinions that he should find in the woods—

"The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind."

But no. The feeling which was at the root of his madness is as conspicuous in his reception of these offers, as in all other parts of his conduct. He patronizes to the end. He is touched by the devotion of Flavius, because he recognises Timon in the light of a master; he declines the gold of Alcibiades, because he wishes to show that *he* has more gold, and can still lavish it; but Apemantus he spurns. He will not accept assistance from a beggar, and a beggar upon whom it would be no matter of pride to waste his bounty, even if the perverse snarler would receive it.

Insanity, arising from pride, is the key of the whole character: pride indulged, manifesting itself indirectly in insane prodigality—pride mortified, directly in insane hatred. Apemantus was wrong when he told him that he was long a madman, and then a fool. He should have reversed it. Timon was first a fool, and then a madman.* Alcibiades sees at a glance that—

"his wits
Are drowned and lost in his calamities;"

and for such a catastrophe nothing can be a more unerring preparation than the stubborn will of pride. "Assuredly,"

* Schlegel pronounces Timon to be a fool in his generosity; a madman in his discontent; every where wanting in the wisdom which enables men in all things to observe the due measure.—M.

says the Laureate, "in most cases, madness is more frequently a disease of the will than of the intellect. When Diabolus appeared before the town of Mansoul, and made his oration to the citizens at Eargate, Lord Will-be-will was one of the first that was for consenting to his words, and letting him into the town." Well may Dr. Southey conclude his speculations on this subject by saying, "In the humorist's course of life, there is a sort of defiance of the world and the world's law; indeed, any man who departs widely from its usages, avows this; and it is, as it ought to be, an uneasy and uncomfortable feeling wherever it is not sustained by a high state of excitement, and that state, if it be lasting, becomes madness."* The Laureate in this sentence has written an unconscious commentary on the Timon of Shakespeare. The soul-stung Athenian, when he

> "made his everlasting mansion
> Upon the beached verge of the salt flood,"

called himself a misanthrope:—he was a madman!

*** The text of Timon of Athens is about the most corrupt of the plays. I suggest a few alterations.

Act III., scene 1. Lucullus, wishing to bribe Flavius, says, "Here's three *solidores* for thee." Steevens declares this coin to be from the mint of the poet. It is *saludores, i. e., saluts-d'or*, a piece coined in France by our Henry V.; see Holinshed, Ruding, Ducange, &c. It is mentioned by Rabelais more than once.

Act IV., scene 3.

> "*Raise* me this beggar, and denude the lord,
> The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,
> The beggar native honor."

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* "The Doctor," &c., vol. iii., pp. 272 and 281. I believe no secret is violated in attributing this work to Dr. Southey.—W. M. [Maginn had already affiliated "The Doctor" upon Southey, in an elaborate and analytic review, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1837–'38. This may be mentioned as one of the best criticisms ever written by Maginn, and no collection of his works can be complete without it. Much about the time when these articles appeared (a little earlier, in fact), the late Horace Wallace Binney had published a critique in the New York *Knickerbocker Magazine*, showing by a clear course of inductive reasoning that none but Southey *could* have written "The Doctor."—M.

Read "*Robe* me this beggar," *i. e.*, Array the beggar in the robes of the senator, and reduce the senator to the nakedness of the beggar, and contempt and honor will be awarded according to their appearance.

Act IV., scene 3. Timon, addressing gold, says,

> "O thou sweet *king-killer*, and dear divorce
> 'Twixt natural son and sire!"

Read "*kin-killer*," *i. e.*, destroyer of all kindred affection. King-killing was no crime in Athens, where, as Shakespeare knew, there was no king; and all Timon's apostrophes to the wicked power of gold relate not to the artificial laws of society, but to the violations of natural ties, as between son and sire, husband and wife.

Same scene.

> "Thou bright defiler
> Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!
> Thou ever young, *fresh*, *loved*, and delicate wooer," &c.

Perhaps *fresh-lived*.

NO. VI.—POLONIUS.

THIS is a character which few actors like to perform.* Custom exacts that it must be represented as a comic part, and yet it wants the stimulants which cheer a comedian. There are no situations or reflections to call forth peals of laughter, or even fill the audience with ordinary merriment. He is played as a buffoon; but the text does not afford the adjuncts of buffoonery;

* Dr. Ulrici, who puts forth high pretensions to be considered a superlatively critical authority upon Shakespeare, speaks of Polonius, from first to last, in a contemptuous manner—as *a fool*. He calls him "the old dotard Polonius,"—he speaks of "the pretended wisdom of a hoary fool,"—he declares that "Polonius pays the penalty of his foolish curiosity and his empty cunning, with which he thinks he can see through and manage every thing,"—and he winds up with a cut at "the folly of Polonius." Schlegel offers no remarks on the character of Polonius, but a greater than Ulrici or Schlegel—the illustrious Goethe himself, thus considers it in his *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, which, it may be noted, contains a copious criticism on the tragedy of Hamlet. He says, "One evening, Serlo [the manager of a country-theatre in Germany] was very merry in his remarks about the character of Polonius, and the manner in which it should be performed. 'I shall endeavor,' said he, 'to represent a very worthy man in a favorable light. I shall exert myself to portray his various characteristics in a becoming manner, his repose and confidence, his emptiness and self-importance, his pliancy and meanness, his candor and sycophancy, his sincere roguery and deceptive truth. I will paint this grey-headed, time-serving, and patient old rogue in the most courtly colors, and the occasionally bold strokes of our author's pencil will prove of some service to my task. I will speak like a book where I am prepared, and like a simpleton when I am in good spirits. I shall be absurd enough to coincide with every one, and clever enough never to notice when I am turned into ridicule. I have not often found a part which affords me so much malicious satisfaction.'"—M.

and, in order to supply their place, antic gesture and grimace are resorted to by the puzzled performer. It is indeed no wonder that he should be puzzled, for he is endeavoring to do what the author never intended. It would not be more impossible — if we be allowed to fancy degrees of impossibility — to perform the pantomimic Pantaloon seriously in the manner of King Lear, than to make the impression which Shakespeare desired that Polonius should make, if he be exhibited in the style of the dotard of Spanish or Italian comedy, or the Sganarelle whom Molière has borrowed from them. There is some resemblance in Lord Ogleby; but we can not persuade ourselves to think that George Colman, elder or younger, could have written any part in Hamlet. I doubt not that both thought their own comedies far superior.

Polonius is a ceremonious courtier; and no more ridicule attaches to him than what attaches to lords of the bedchamber, or chamberlains, or other such furniture of a court in general.* It is deemed necessary that kings should be hedged not only by the divinity of their regal honors, but by the more corporal entrenchments of officers of state. In fact it must be so; and in every history of the world we find these functionaries, differing only in name. We know not the internal arrangements of

* Polonius is a perfect character in its kind; nor is there any foundation for the objections which have been made to the consistency of this part. It is said that he acts very foolishly and talks very sensibly. There is no inconsistency in that. Again, that he talks wisely at one time and foolishly at another; that his advice to Laertes is very sensible, and his advice to the King and Queen on the subject of Hamlet's madness very ridiculous. But he gives the one as a father, and is sincere in it; he gives the other as a mere courtier, a busy-body, and is accordingly officious, garrulous, and impertinent. In short, Shakespeare has been accused of inconsistency in this and other characters, only because he has kept up the distinction which there is in nature, between the understandings and the moral habits of men, between the absurdity of their ideas and the absurdity of their motives. Polonius is not a fool, but he makes himself appear one. His folly, whether in his actions or speeches, comes under the head of impropriety of intention.—Hazlitt.

the palaces of the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel;* but we may be sure that Bela the son of Beor, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river, and Hadar, whose city was Pau, and whose wife was Matred, the daughter of Mezahab, and the other princes of the house of Esau, who appear for a brief moment in the earliest record of human affairs in the book of the world's generation, but to die and make way for others to reign in their stead, had courtiers around them, to whom were allotted duties in fashion different, in spirit the same as those which were performed by the courtly officials of the Byzantium emperors, the togaed comites of the Cæsars, the ruffled and periwigged *gens de la cour* of the Grand Monarque, or the gold sticks and silver sticks of Queen Victoria; and performed, no doubt, for the same reason — for that con-si-de-ra-ti-on, which, whether in the shape of flocks and herds, or land and beeves, or the more easily managed commodity of shekels and sovereigns, when the secret of "a circulating medium" was discovered, has ever been the stimulants of the general herd attracted to a court. It would be indeed travelling far from the purpose of these papers to talk morals or politics on such a subject; but there can be no harm in saying that, in times of difficulty or danger, when "uneasy is the head that wears a crown," it is not to them its wearer must look for ease or assistance. The dog loves the master — the cat loves the house. The nobler animal who couches not in the drawing-room, and is not caressed and pampered with soothing and officious hand, but who guards the dwelling, and follows to the field, may, if treated with kindness, be depended upon to the last. He will die at the feet of a master returning in the twentieth year — will couch upon his grave — will seize his murderer by the throat. The mere do-

* Gen. xxxvi. 31–39.

mestic creature, following her instinct, will cling to the house through every change of dynasty, ready to welcome with gratulatory purr whatever hand may rub down her glossy coat, and supply her with customary food, even if that hand should be reeking with the blood of the fallen owner of the mansion in which she had been reared. But the cat is not to be blamed. She acts as nature meant her to act: and what nature is to a cat, habit is to a courtier. Nothing can be more improbable than that the Queen should bother herself—I talk Hibernically—with reading these papers; nothing is more certain than that, if she does, she will not believe a word of what I am saying. Yet if she lives to the age of the great lady in whose days the creator of Polonius flourished—and may she so live, equally glorious in her character of Queen, and far happier in her character of woman!—she may be inclined to think that I am right, and that the profession of etiquette, well calculated as it may be to dignify the ceremonial of state, is not to be confounded with the loyalty which inspires

"The manly hearts to guard a throne."

But it is perfectly natural that the professors of the science should set a high value upon it. The chamberlain who gave up the monarchy as lost when he saw M. Roland enter the presence of the king with ribbons in his shoes* was perfectly sincere. It was no part of his business to inquire further than what he saw before him; he had not to ask into the remoter causes which gave M. Roland the courage or the presumption to violate the laws of court decorum, which the staff-bearer had throughout his life considered to be as steadfast as the laws which regulated the motions of the earth, if indeed he ever condescended to think on such uncourtly trifles. It is easy to laugh at this chamberlain; but he was substantially right. The

* "Roland the Just with ribbons in his shoes."—*Anti-Jacobin.*

kingdom of the doomed Louis did not depend upon stockings or buckles; but it depended upon the belief that the person of the king was inviolate, and the breach of decorum was but the first step leading to the scaffold. The clown, who troubles not himself with astronomical, meteorological, or chemical studies, knows well that harvest is to follow seed-time, and prognosticates with unerring certainty that the grain which he is scattering in the ground is to ripen into a golden ear; so our court functionary, who had never dreamt of political speculations, never consulted any philosophical observers — looked not beyond the circle of the Tuileries, and would not have understood a single word of Mr. Carlyle's eloquent theories — saw in this one grain of disrespect the coming crop of destruction. I know nothing of his after history — perhaps he emigrated with others of his order; but if he did not originally commit that false step — and I hope for the honor of so shrewd an observer that he did not — [for what had *he* to do with chivalry?] — I have little doubt that he found his fitting place among the gold-laced suite of the Emperor — welcomed with well-trained bows the return of Louis the Eighteenth — served Charles the Tenth with appropriate ceremony — and is, I trust, now in his old age discussing the glories of the powdered and rapiered circle of Louis Quinze, beneath the approving smile of Louis Philippe.*

Of this race was Polonius.† Let not the abstracted sage or

* This paper was published in May, 1838, soon after the accession of Queen Victoria, and while Louis Philippe (Lafayette's "best of republics") was yet on the throne of France.—M.

† The first edition of Hamlet, printed in 1603, was probably written (Collier thinks) in "the winter of 1601, or the spring of 1602." A single copy of that edition exists in the library of the Duke of Devonshire, and contains about half as much as is to found in the enlarged and greatly revised edition, published in 1604. In the earlier Hamlet, Polonius is called Corambis, and Reynaldo, his servant, is there called Montano. Mr. Verplanck conjectures that the "Hamlet" which was on the stage as early as 1594, was probably identical with that printed in 1603, and was the work of various periods of Shakespeare's life.—M.

the smug sneerer imagine that it was a race of fools. In such courts as those which Shakespeare contemplated they were far from it indeed. They had been bred in camps and colleges—[Polonius had been at the University, where in the dramatic entertainments, usual in the seats of learning in Shakespeare's time, he was selected to perform no less a part than that of Julius Cæsar]—had acquired the polish of courts, if, indeed, we should not rather say they created it—mingled habitually among the great and the witty, the graceful and the wise; but, from perpetually confining themselves to one class of society, and that the most artificial of all classes, and deeming all other interests depending upon that of their masters, as they saw all other persons bowing in subservience before them, it is no wonder that their world was bounded by the precincts of a palace, and their wisdom or ability exerted, as everybody's ability or wisdom is exerted, to shine or thrive by the arts which contributed to make way in the world wherein their lot was cast. Their sphere of courtly duty made them appear to be frivolous; it does not follow that they were so in life elsewhere.

This distinction is admirably kept up in Polonius. In the presence he is all ceremony and etiquette. He will not open the business of Hamlet's addresses to his daughter, while the ambassadors from Norway are waiting an audience.

> "Give first admittance to the ambassadors,
> Thy news shall be the fruit of that great feast."

Who could be better qualified to introduce them with due honors? The king appoints him to the duty at once:—

> "Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in."

He performs his courtly mission, and waits its conclusion before he commences to speak on what concerns his daughter.

> "This business is well ended;"

and now for a speech.

> "My liege, and madam, to expostulate,
> What majesty should be, what duty is,
> Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
> Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time."

This is the exordium. We now proceed to the propositio.

> "Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
> And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
> I will be brief: Your noble son is mad."

The narratio should follow; but a parenthetical remark can not be resisted.

> "Mad call I it."

You must take it on my assertion—

> "For to define true madness,
> What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?
> But let that go."

The queen agrees with the orator that it might as well be let go—for she desires "more matter," with less art. Her chamberlain, of course, like all rhetoricians, disclaims the employment of rhetorical artifice—

> "Madam, I swear, I use no art at all."

and proceeds to the narratio, which is again stopped for a moment by a trick of the art which he denies he is using.

> "That he is mad, 'tis true, 'tis pity;
> And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
> But farewell it, for I will use no art.
> Mad let us grant him then: and now remains
> That we find out the cause of this effect;
> Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
> For this effect, defective, comes of cause."

[The argument is strictly logical. It being granted that he is mad, we must find the cause of what logicians call effect—

which in common parlance, as applied to the madness of Hamlet, would be called a defect—we must find it, I say; because whatever an effect may be, defective or not, it must arise from a cause.]

> "Thus it remains, and the remainder thus perpend.*
> I have a daughter," &c.

In due course of reasoning he exhibits his proofs—Hamlet's verses and letter, and Ophelia's confessions. In equally strict order follows the argument consisting of an elaborately-arranged enumeration of the circumstances attendant on Hamlet's madness:—

> "And he, repulsed (a short tale to make)
> Fell into a sadness; thence into a fast;
> Thence to a watch; [and] thence into a weakness;
> Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
> Into the madness wherein now he raves,
> And all we mourn for."

At this period of the speech, if it were delivered in the House of Commons, there would be loud cries of "Hear, hear," and the right honorable gentleman would be obliged to pause for several minutes. If he were a rising member, all his friends would come up to congratulate him on his success, and the impression he had obviously made; if an established speaker, the friends of his party would exclaim, "How admirable!"—"Polonius surpasses himself to-night"—"Did you ever hear anything so fine, so close, so logical," &c. &c. The opposite side would be obliged to look candid, and say that it certainly was clever.

All that remains is the peroratio. Cheered by the success of

* This line is unnatural. The metre would be right, and the technical arrangement of the style more in character if we read,

> "Thus it remains: remainder thus perpend."—W. M.

[Collier reads:—

> "Thus it remains, and the remainder thus,
> Perpend."]—M.

his arguments, he proceeds triumphantly in gratulation of his own sagacity.

> "Hath there been such a time (I'd fain know that)
> That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
> When it proved otherwise?"

[The king says, "Not that I know"—which is equivalent to "cheers from the ministerial benches."]

> "Take this from this, if this be otherwise."

[This is a sample of *gestus*. He points to his head and shoulder.]

> "If circumstances lead me, I will find
> Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
> Within the centre."

The speech is over, complete in all its parts. There is scarcely an oratorical figure which is omitted, and it might serve as an unequalled model for many a crack speech "elsewhere." Who is there that has not heard promises of brevity made preludes to tediousness, and disclaimers of art vehicles of rhetorical flourish? What figure more used than amplification such as that—prefaced, as usual in such cases, by a declaration that the tale will be short—in which Polonius employs half a dozen lines to detail the degrees of madness of Hamlet?—and what practice more common than passionate appeals to the past conduct of the speaker as guarantees for the wisdom and uprightness of the course which on the present occasion he is about to pursue? The speech of Polonius translated into Ciceronian Latin would be worthy of Cicero himself; expanded into three columns of newspaper report, would be the topic of conversation the day after its delivery in all the clubs, and the welcome theme of applause or confutation by the leading article-manufacturers of both sides of the question.

Here Polonius was in his character of courtier and privy-

councillor. He had the ear of the King, and he held it fast. His majesty and his royal consort duly appreciated the merits of the old orator; but, as usual in courts, he does not win the same favor in the eyes of Hamlet. The ministers of the existing prince are seldom favorites with his heir-apparent—his immediate Camarilla never. Youth also generally thinks itself wiser than age; and we wonder not to find in the next scene that Hamlet treat Polonius as a driveller. The old gentleman bears courteously with the incivilities of one whom he considers to be either a mere madman or a prankish jester, and, recurring to the days of his youth, excuses the prince for indulging in feelings which lead to derangement of ideas. Even the recollections, however, of the days when, like his contemporary the gravedigger, "he did love, did love," can not overcome him to the degree of confessing that he was actually mad. He suffered much extremity; but, after all, he was only "very near madness."*

* Is not this dialogue in blank verse? This speech of Polonius certainly is.

> "Still harping on
> My daughter! Yet he knew me not at first.
> He said, I was a fishmonger. He is
> Far gone, far gone; and truly, in my youth
> I suffered much extremity for love:
> Very near this. I'll speak to him again."

I recommend all future editors of Hamlet to restore the original reading of the passage immediately preceding—

> "For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog,
> Being a *good*-kissing carrion. Have you a daughter?"

in spite of Warburton's magnificent comment, which, according to Johnson, sets the critic on a level with the author. "The illative particle [for]," says the bishop, "shows the speaker to be reasoning from something he had said before: what that was we learn in these words, '*to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one picked out of ten thousand.*' Having said this, the chain of ideas led him to reflect upon the argument which libertines bring against Providence, from the circumstance of abounding *evil*. In the next speech, therefore, he endeavors to answer that objection, and vindicate Providence, even on a supposition of the fact that almost all men were wicked. His argument,

When the players are introduced, it is only becoming that he who had so long known what was the *mode* should be their principal critic — and his criticisms are in the most approved

in the two lines in question, is to this purpose. *But why need we wonder at this abounding of evil? For, if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, which, though a god, yet shedding its heat and influence upon carrion.* Here he stops short, lest, talking too consequentially, the hearer might suspect his madness to be feigned — and so turns him off from the subject by inquiring of his daughter. But the inference which he intended to make was a very noble one, and to this purpose: If this (says he) be the case, that the effect follows the thing operated upon [*carrion*], and not the thing operating [*a god*], why need we wonder that the Supreme Cause of all things diffusing its blessings on mankind, who is, as it were, a dead carrion, dead in original sin — man, instead of a proper return of duty, should breed only corruption and vices? This is the argument at length, and is as noble a one in behalf of Providence as could come from the schools of divinity. But this wonderful man had an art, not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but with what they *think*. The sentiment, too, is altogether in character; for Hamlet is perpetually moralizing, and his circumstances make this reflection very natural."

Surely never before or since was any poor illative particle, *for*, pressed to perform such hard duty. If Hamlet had *said* all that his theological commentator makes him *think*, Polonius would have set him down as mad, beyond all hope of recovery. I have often thought, while reading this note, that it was a pity Warburton had not written a commentary on the pleadings of the Lord of Baisecul and his antagonist before Pantagruel, and on the judgment delivered in the case by that renowned giant. If he discovered an essay on original sin in this illative particle *for*, he would assuredly have dug up a whole Corpus Theologicum in the law arguments in Rabelais. The *etc.* of Lyttleton, which conveyed so much meaning to the mind of Coke, is not to be compared with the *for* of Warburton. He changed the old reading, "a *good*-kissing carrion," into "a *god*-kissing carrion."

The meaning of the passage is this. Hamlet suspects that Polonius knows of his love for Ophelia, and that he intends to "loose his daughter to him." He therefore calls him a fishmonger, *i. e.* a purveyor of loose fish. It would not be agreeable in pages which must fall into the hands of the young and fair to follow up the allusion. Polonius interprets the word literally, and is instantly assured that the chances are ten thousand to one if he is as honest as the mere tradesman who sells actual fish. The prince, in his affectation of craziness, proceeds to hint that the consequences of exposing a young lady to the temptations of persons in high rank or of warm blood may be dangerous, and couples the *outre* assertion that the sun can breed maggots, with a reference to Polonius's daughter. *Let her not walk in the sun.* Let her not

style of *politesse*. When Hamlet speaks his part of the tragedy, of course Polonius compliments him for the good accent and good discretion with which he has spoken it. When the player delivers the remainder of the speech, the critic finds it too long. Rebuked by the prince for his censure, he takes the earliest opportunity of declaring that an affected phrase, which startles Hamlet somewhat, to declare that it is good. In the end, when the player displays an emotion roused by his art, Polonius, according to the rules of *goût*, desires that an end should be put to the performance. When the play is actually performed before the king, etiquette keeps him silent until he sees there is something in it displeasing "in a high quarter," and then the shrewd courtier stops it at once. It is his voice which directs that they should "give o'er the play." He is, throughout, the ceremonious but sagacious *attaché* of a palace; and the king and queen accordingly treat him with the utmost deference, and

put herself in the peculiar danger to which I allude, and to which her father's performing the part of fishmonger may lead. The sun is a good-kissing carrion — [*carogne* — it is a a word which elsewhere occurs in Shakespeare. Quickly, in the Merry Wives of Windsor, is called a carrion, &c.] — a baggage fond of kissing. In Henry IV. Prince Hal compares the sun to a fair hot wench in flame-colored taffeta; and if the sun can breed maggots in a dead dog, who knows what may happen elsewhere?

There is a troublesome word in King Lear, of which I have never seen a satisfactory interpretation. In the storm of abusive epithets which Kent pours upon the steward, he calls him "a barber-monger." The guesses at the meaning are all insufficient. Perhaps it should read "barbel-monger,"— that is, fishmonger in a peculiar sense. I throw out my conjecture to be rejected at pleasure. I must remark, however, that those who are puzzled by the meaning of "a hundred-pound knave" may find it in Rabelais or Sir Thomas Urquhart. It is a word of reproach, addressed to the heavy *pondres-pondres* Germans. It occurs in Bridlegoose's famous story of the pugnacious Gascon, in the camp at Stockholm. Sir John Hawkins, in his absurd life of Dr. Johnson imagines that it is a word invented by Urquhart, with no more meaning than the ordinary slang words of the day.

In the conclusion of the scene between Hamlet and Polonius, the former exclaims, "These tedious old fools!" Would it not be better, "Thou tedious old fool!"—for it is plain that Hamlet is thinking only of the troublesome old man who has been pestering him.—W. M.

consult him in their most critical emergencies. He dies in their service, fitly practising a stratagem, in perfect accordance with the *morale* of the circle in which he has always moved, and in which he has engaged to show his wisdom, devotion, and address.* Hamlet well characterizes the class of men to which the slain courtier belonged, in his farewell to the body :—

> "Thou busy, rash, intruding fool, farewell;
> I took thee for thy better — take thy fortune.
> Thou findest to be too busy is some danger."

But Polonius is no fool, though he is so called here. Hamlet is annoyed by his meddling and officiousness, and therefore applies the epithet. He marks his sense of his general respect for the old man, even when he is most pestered by his interference. In a peevish exclamation he styles him "a tedious old fool:" but when he sees that the players are inclined to follow his own example, he checks them by an authoritative command :—

> "Follow that lord, and look you mock him not."

If he calls him, to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "a great baby, not yet out of his swaddling-clouts," and jeers him in their presence, it is partly to show that he is but mad north-north-west, and can know a hawk from a handsaw when the wind is southerly; and partly to mark that he has discovered the conspiracy against him, and to display his contempt for all engaged in it.

Abstracted from his courtier character, Polonius is a man of profound sense, and of strict and affectionate attention to his

* "Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process; I warrant she'll tax him home.
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech of vantage. Fare you well, my liege.
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know."

duties. A man whom his children love can never be contemptible. No one, it is said, can be a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*, because he sees all the petty physical wants and moral defects of his master. How much more difficult to be the object of esteem and devotion in the eyes of those who have turned their eyes upon us from childhood! Natural affection will, of course, do much; but the buffoon of the stage never could have inspired the feelings exhibited by his children, who must have been perpetually grieved and disgraced by antic buffoonery, of which they, from their connection with the court, must have been constant witnesses. Laertes, a fine, high-spirited young gentleman, and Ophelia, the rose of May, the grace and ornament of the circle in which she moved, could not have so deeply reverenced and so bitterly deplored their father, if he had been indeed a great baby still in his swaddling-clouts. The *double* of Pantaloon, whom we see tumbling about in Drury Lane or Covent Garden, would not have roused the blood of Laertes to fury, still less led him to justify assassination in avenging his fall; nor would his death have driven Ophelia to madness. Such a father might be dead and gone—

> "And at his head a grass-green turf,
> And at his heels a stone"—

according to the inflexible laws of mortality; but his son would soon wipe the natural tears he might drop, and let him lie in his grave without any complaint of

> "His obscure funeral;
> No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones;
> No noble rite, nor formal ostentation."

Nor would his daughter, in her broken-hearted insanity, have imagined that at his death, violets, the sweetest flowers of the spring, had universally withered. Let me observe that, by this remark, I mean no disrespect to our actors, many of the most eminent of whom have performed the part. They yield to long-

established custom, and, as the part is not of the same importance in the play as Shylock in the Merchant of Venice, it is not probable that any Macklin will arise to rescue him from buffoonery. Besides, as it is necessary that he should in one part of the play designedly act up to the follies of Hamlet, it would be difficult to make the distinction between the assumed and the natural character; and yet perhaps it ought to be attempted, for, as it is played at present, it is perhaps the least attractive of the prominent *dramatis personæ* of Shakespeare.

Even in the very part to which I have just alluded, where he is fooling Hamlet to the top of his bent, he can not avoid displaying glances of his habitual shrewdness.* He suspects the reality of the madness from the beginning. The insulting taunts addressed to him at second hand from Juvenal only call forth the reflection that there is method in the madness. In the end he plainly considers it as nothing more than a prank. He bids the queen

> "Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
> And that your grace hath screened and stood between
> Much heat and him."

* Dr. Johnson appears to have examined the character of Polonius with unusual care. "Polonius," he says, "is a man bred in courts; exercised in business; stored with observation; confident in his knowledge; proud of his eloquence; and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in particular application; he is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw upon his depositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind, in its enfeebled state, can not be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to the dereliction of his faculties; he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls into his former train. The idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius." This, it may be observed, is a view not much unlike that taken by Maginn.—M.

Neither Laertes nor Ophelia are present while he is engaged in bandying folly against folly, and he therefore does not such before those by whom he most desires to be respected. When alone with them, his true character appears; and what can be more sensible? His counsels to his son have never been for worldly wisdom surpassed. The ten precepts of Lord Burleigh, addressed to his son Robert, on which it is generally supposed the apophthegms of Polonius are based, are perhaps equal in shrewdness, but they want the pithiness and condensation of verse. Neither are they as philosophical, being drawn, to talk logically, *à posteriori*, while those of Shakespeare are deduced *à priori*. Take, for example, Lord Burleigh's fifth maxim on borrowing and lending money:—

"Beware of suretyship for thy best friends. He that payeth another man's debts seeketh his own decay. But if thou canst not otherwise choose, rather lend thy money thyself upon good bonds, although thou borrow it; so shalt thou secure thyself, and pleasure a friend. Neither borrow money of a neighbor or a friend, but of a stranger, where, paying for it, thou shalt hear no more of it; otherwise thou shalt eclipse thy credit, lose thy freedom, and pay as dear as to another. But, in borrowing of money, be precious of thy word, for he that takes care of keeping payment is lord of another man's purse."

Full of practical good sense, no doubt, as indeed is every thing that "wise Burleigh spoke;" but it might occur to minds of smaller calibre than that of the Lord High Treasurer. Polonius takes higher ground:—

> "Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
> For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
> And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Lord Burleigh gives us but the petty details: in Shakespeare we find the principle.

Again, his Lordship's ninth precept is:—

"Trust not any man with thy life, credit, or estate; for it is mere folly for a man to enthrall himself to a friend, as though, occasion being offered, he should not care to become thine enemy."

It is good advice; but how much better done by Polonius!—

> "This above all. To thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man."

A comparison of all the precepts of the poet and the statesman would yield a similar result. And yet nobody ever thought of exhibiting Burleigh, inferior as he is in dramatical wisdom, as an object of merriment upon the stage for many a year after he had been gathered to his fathers, until it pleased the author of the Critic to put him forward to make his oracular nod. There is no use in moralizing, but we can not help reflecting that Sheridan would have done better in life if he could have followed the prudential advice of the great minister whom he mocked. It is certain that, if he had avoided mimicking him at humble distance elsewhere, and never thought of playing at Parliament — if, content with winning dramatic honors only second to those of Molière, he had eschewed throwing himself into paths where the half-nods of the less than tenth-rate Burleighs are of more weight than all the wit and genius of the School for Scandal — there would not have been any necessity that his death should be neglected and his funeral honored with a contempt and a sympathy equally characteristic of those whom his Lordship calls "the glow-worms, I mean parasites and sycophants, who will feed and fawn upon thee in the summer of prosperity, but in adverse storms they will shelter thee no more than an arbor in winter."

That the austere Lord High Treasurer might have been the mark for the covert wit of the dramatist — covert, indeed, for in his time, or in that which immediately succeeded it, there

was no safety in making unseemly jests too openly about him —is highly probable; and the enemy of Essex and Raleigh* could not be an object of admiration to Shakespeare. Lord Burleigh, in his courtly demeanor, was as observant of etiquette as Polonius, and as ready in using indirections to find thereby directions out. The Queen was fond of both ceremony and statecraft: but I doubt much that the old gentleman in Hamlet is intended for anything more than a general personification of ceremonious courtiers. If Lord Chesterfield had designed to write a commentary upon Polonius, he could not have more completely succeeded than by writing his famous letters to his son. His Lordship, like every man of taste and virtue, and what Pope has comprehended in the expressive term of "all that," in his time utterly despised Shakespeare. There is nothing to blame in this. What can we talk on but of what we know? One of the grandest of the herd, Horace Walpole, wrote the Mysterious Mother, and therefore he had a right (had he not?) to offer an opinion on Macbeth, and to pronounce Midsummer's Night's Dream a bundle of rubbish, far more ridiculous than the most absurd Italian opera. Lord Chesterfield wrote nothing, that I know of, to give him a name as an author, except his letters. Of course, he wrote despatches, protocols, and other such ware, worthy, no doubt, of the Red Tapery of which he was so eminent a member.

* Even in these precepts his Lordship can not avoid a "gird" at those remarkable men whose accomplishments were, however, much more likely to please poets and adventurers than sober statesmen. We know how Spenser immortalizes the Shepherd of the Ocean, and with what pomp of verse "the general of our gracious emperess" is introduced almost by name in the chorus of Henry V., Shakespeare's most national play, as a fit object of comparison with the hero of Azincour himself. In Lord Burleigh they only appear as suiteth examples to point the moral of a maxim. "Yet I advise thee not to affect or neglect popularity too much. *Seek not to be Essex — shun to be Raleigh.*" — W. M.

NO. VII.—IAGO.

I HAVE been accused by some, who have taken the trouble of these reading papers, that I am fond of paradoxes, and write not to comment upon Shakespeare, but to display logical dexterity in maintaining the untenable side of every question. To maintain that Falstaff was in heart melancholy and Jaques gay, to contrast the fortunes of Romeo and Bottom, or to plead the cause of Lady Macbeth, is certainly not in accordance with the ordinary course of criticism; but I have given my reasons, sound or unsound as they may be, for my opinions, which, I have said with old Montaigne, I do not pretend to be good, but to be *mine*. What appears to me to be the distinguishing feature of Shakespeare is, that his characters are real men and women, not mere abstractions. In the best of us all there are many blots, in the worst there are many traces of goodness. There is no such thing as angels or devils in the world. We have passions and feelings, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, pretty equally distributed among us; and that which actuates the highest and the lowest, the most virtuous and the most profligate, the bravest and meanest, must, in its original elements, be the same. People do not commit wicked actions from the mere love of wickedness; there must always be an incentive of precisely the same kind as that which stimulates to the noblest actions—ambition, love of adventure, passion, necessity. All our virtues closely border upon vices, and are not unfrequently

blended. The robber may be generous, the miser just, the cruel man conscientious, the rake honorable, the fop brave. In various relations of life, the same man may play many characters as distinct from one another as day from night. I venture to say that the creatures of Boz's fancy, Fagin or Sikes, did not appear in every circle as the unmitigated scoundrels we see them in Oliver Twist.* It is, I suppose, necessary to the exigencies of the tale, that no other part of their characters should be exhibited; but, after all, the Jew only carries the commercial, and the housebreaker the military principle, to an extent which society can not tolerate. In element, the feeling is the same that covers the ocean with the merchant-flags of England, and sends forth the hapless boys to the trade of picking pockets —that inspires the highwayman to stop a traveller on Hounslow, and spirits the soldier to face a cannon at Waterloo. Robber, soldier, thief, merchant, are all equally men. It is necessary, for a critical investigation of character, not to be content with taking things merely as they seem. We must endeavor to strip off the covering with which habit or necessity has enveloped the human mind, and to inquire after motives as well as look at actions. It would not be an unamusing task to analyze the career of two persons starting under similar circumstances, and placed in situations not in essence materially different — one ending at the debtors' door of Newgate, amid hootings and execrations, and the other borne to his final resting-place in Westminster Abbey, graced by all the pomps that heraldry can bestow.

As Shakespeare therefore draws men, and not one-side sketches of character, it is always possible to treat his personages as if they were actually existing people; and there is

* This paper was published in *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1839, and Oliver Twist had appeared in the same periodical shortly before. The reference to the work, therefore, was very natural. — M.

always some redeeming point. The bloody Macbeth is kind and gentle to his wife; the gore-stained Richard, gallant and daring; Shylock is an affectionate father, and a good-natured master; Claudius, in Hamlet, is fond of his foully-won queen, and exhibits, at least, remorse for his deed in heart-rending soliloquies; Angelo is upright in public life, though yielding to sore temptation in private; Cloton is brutal and insulting, but brave; the ladies are either wholly without blemishes, or have merits to redeem them: in some plays, as Julius Cæsar, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, and several others, no decidedly vicious character is introduced at all. The personages introduced are exposed to the frailties of our nature, but escape from its grosser crimes and vices.

But Iago! Ay! there's the rub. Well may poor Othello look down to his feet, and, not seeing them different from those of others, feel convinced that it is a fable which attributes a cloven hoof to the devil.* His next test—

* "While the Moor bears the nightly color of suspicion and deceit only on his visage, Iago is black within. He haunts Othello like his evil genius, and with his light (and therefore the more dangerous) insinuations, he leaves him no rest; it is as if by means of an unfortunate affinity, founded however in nature, this influence was by necessity more powerful over him than the voice of his good angel Desdemona. A more artful villain than this Iago was never portrayed; he spreads his nets with a skill which nothing can escape. The repugnance inspired by his aims becomes tolerable from the attention of the spectators being directed to his means: these furnish endless employment to the understanding. Cool, discontented, and morose, arrogant where he dare be so, but humble and insinuating when it suits his purposes, he is a complete master in the art of dissimulation; accessible only to selfish emotions, he is thoroughly skilled in rousing the passions of others, and of availing himself of every opening which they give him: he is as excellent an observer of men as any one can be who is unacquainted with higher motives of action from his own experience; there is always some truth in his malicious observations on them. He does not merely pretend an obdurate incredulity as to the virtue of women, he actually entertains it; and this, too, falls in with his whole way of thinking, and makes him the more fit for the execution of his purpose. As in every thing he sees merely the hateful side, he dissolves in the rudest manner the charm which the

"If that thou be'st a devil, I can not kill thee"*—

affords a proof that Iago is not actually a fiend, for he wounds him; but still he can not think him any thing less than a "demi-devil," being bled, not killed. Nor is it wonderful that the parting instruction of Lodovico to Cassio should be to enforce the most cunning cruelty of torture on the hellish villain, or that all the party should vie with each other in heaping upon him words of contumely and execration. He richly deserved them. He had ensnared the soul and body of Othello to do the most damnable actions; he had been the cause of the cruel murder of Desdemona; he had killed his own wife, had plotted the assassination of Cassio, had betrayed and murdered Roderigo. His determination to keep silence when questioned was at least judicious:—

> "Demand me nothing: what you know, you know;
> From this time forth I never will speak word"—

for, with his utmost ingenuity, he could hardly find any thing to say for himself. Is there nothing, then, to be said for him by any body else?

No more than this. He is the sole exemplar of studied personal revenge in the plays.† The philosophical mind of Ham-

imagination casts over the relation between the two sexes: he does so for the purpose of revolting Othello's senses, whose heart otherwise might easily have convinced him of Desdemona's innocence. This must serve as an excuse for the numerous expressions in the speeches of Iago from which modesty shrinks. If Shakespeare had written in our days he would not perhaps have dared to hazard them; and yet this must certainly have greatly injured the truth of his picture."—SCHLEGEL.

* After this line he wounds Iago. Then follows:—

> "*Lod.* Wrench his sword from him.
> *Iago.* I bleed, sir, but not killed."

This is strange language. Should it not be "I [*i. e.*, Ay, as usual in Shakespeare], *bled*, sir, but not killed"?—W. M.

† In the late Professor Wilson's latest writings ("Christopher under Canvass"), one of the *Dies Boreales*—April, 1850—is devoted to an eloquent though desultory dialogue-criticism on the tragedy of "Othello." He says

let ponders too deeply, and sees both sides of the question too clearly, to be able to carry any plan of vengeance into execution. Romeo's revenge on Tybalt for the death of Mercutio is a sudden gust of ungovernable rage. The vengeances in the historical plays are those of war or statecraft. In Shylock, the passion is hardly personal against his intended victim. A swaggering Christian is at the mercy of a despised and insulted Jew. The hatred is national and sectarian. Had Bassanio or Gratiano, or any other of their creed, been in his power, he would have been equally relentless. He is only retorting the wrongs and insults of his tribe, in demanding full satisfaction, and imitating the hated Christians in their own practices:—

> "And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?
> If we are like you in the rest, we will
> Resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong

---

that Iago "hated Othello for not promoting him, but Cassio. That seems to me the real, tangible motive — a haunting, goading, fretting preference — an affront — an insult — a curbing of power — wounding him where alone he is sensitive — in self-esteem and pride. See his contempt for Cassio as a book-warrior — and 'for a fair life' — simply like our notion of a 'milksop.'" It is added that "a singular combination in him is his wily Italian wit — like Jachimo's — and his rough, soldier-like, plain, blunt, jovial manners — the tone of the camp, and of the wild, luring, *reckless* camp — plenty of hardihood — fit for toil, peril, privation. You never for a moment doubt his courage, his presence of mind, his resources. He does not once quail in presence of Othello at his utmost fury. He does not stir up the lion from without, through the bars of his cage, with an invisible rod of iron — that is, a whip of scorpions; he lashes up the Wild Beast, and flinches not an inch from fury that would smite, or tusk that would tear — a veritable lion-queller and king." Wilson also thinks that Iago was even affected by the *color* of Othello; "no doubt, with more hate and aversion at being commanded and outshone by him. High military rank and command — high favor by the Senate — high fame and esteem in the world — high royalty of spirit — happiness in marriage — all these in Othello are proper subjects of envy, and motives of hate in Iago. The Nigger!" — On the other hand, Coleridge calls Iago's "a motiveless malignity." — The *ostensible* motives are anger at Cassio being placed over his head, and jealousy on account of his suspicions that Othello has been too intimate with Emilia, his wife. He avows both — particularly the latter. — M.

> A Christian, what is *his* humility?
> Revenge!
> [And] if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should
> His sufferance be by Christian example?
> Why, [sir], revenge! The villainy you teach me
> I'll execute, and it shall go hard, but
> I'll better the instruction."*

It is, on the whole, a passion remarkably seldom exhibited in Shakespeare in any form. Iago, as I have said, is its only example, as directed against an individual.†

Iago had been affronted in the tenderest point. He felt that he had strong claims on the office of lieutenant to Othello, who had witnessed his soldierly abilities.

* Printed as prose in the editions. The insertion of *and* before *if*, where it may serve as the ordinary copulative — or as the common form, *an if*, perpetually recurring, as in Romeo, "*an if* a man did need a poison now;" [on which form I may remark, in passing, Horne Tooke talks ignorantly enough, in his "Diversions of Purley"] — and of a monosyllable between *why* and *revenge*, makes the whole passage metrical. I am inclined to think that *revenge* should be repeated in the concluding lines. "If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? REVENGE!" If, on the contrary, a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be?

> "REVENGE! REVENGE! The villainy you teach me
> I'll execute."

As an editor I might scruple to exhibit the text thus. I should recommend it to an actor in place of the prosaic and unmetrical — *Why, revenge.*—W. M.

† Dr. Ulrici places Iago as the "manifest opposite" of Othello, describes him as "the white-washed, hypocritical power of evil," and adds, "his is a selfish, half-animal nature, which is unable to control its desires and passions simply because it has never made the attempt. The mere semblance of virtue easily deceives the open, unsuspecting Othello. He, indeed, is the prey of a vulgar jealousy: he hates Othello, because he believes him, on no other ground than his own unreasonable suspicions, guilty of adultery with his wife Emilia. With Iago, honor, even in its worldly acceptation, is a mere pretence. Honor, with him, means nothing but external influence and reputation — it matters not how acquired. In this sense, too, he is jealous; for he hunts Othello and Cassio into his toils simply because the former has preferred the latter to himself. These are the motives of all his conduct, which form the groundwork of the tragic plot. Even as the mere organic opposite to Othello, this character was indispensable to the whole piece."—M.

"At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds,
Christian and heathen."

The greatest exertion was made to procure it for him, and yet he is refused. What is still worse, the grounds of the refusal are military: Othello evades the request of the bowing magnificoes

"with a bombast circumstance
"Horribly stuffed with epithets of war."

He assigns to civilians reasons for passing over Iago, drawn from his own trade, of which they, of course, could not pretend to be adequate judges. And worst of all, when this practised military man, is, for military reasons, set aside, who is appointed? Some man of greater renown and skill in arms? *That* might be borne; but it is no such thing. The choice of Othello lights upon,

"Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damned in a fair wife,*

---

* This is one of the most puzzling lines in Shakespeare. All the explanations are forced. Cassio had no wife, and his treatment of Bianca, who stands in place of one, is contemptuous; nor does he let her stand in the way of his duty. She tenderly reproaches him for his long absence, and he hastily sends her home, harshly saying,

"I do attend here on the general,
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me *woman'd*."

Tyrwhitt reads, *damned in a fair life;* interpreting it as an allusion to the judgment denounced in the Gospel against those of whom all men speak well, which is very far-fetched indeed. If *life* were the reading, it might signify that Cassio was damned for the rough life of a soldier by the fair, *i. e.*, the easy life he had hitherto led. Johnson gives it up, as a passage "which, for the present, must be resigned to corruption and obscurity." A writer in one of the early volumes of *Blackwood's Magazine*, proposed somewhat ingeniously,

"A great arithmetician,
A fellow almost damned: in a fair *wise*,
Who never set a squadron in the field."

But this is not satisfactory. Why is Cassio a fellow almost damned? Like Dr. Johnson, "I have nothing that I can, with any approach to confidence,

> That never set a squadron in the field,
> Nor the division of a battle knows,
> More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
> Wherein the toged consuls can propose

---

propose," but I think that the word "*damned*" is a corruption of some word which signified delicate, soft, dainty, or something of the kind, and that for "*in*" we should read "as." "A fellow almost as soft and delicate as a fair wife," as dainty as a woman. I am not fortunate to supply it, but I have somewhat thought it was —

"A fellow almost *trimmed* as a fair wife."

Such a fellow as the "neat and *trimly* dressed" courtier, "perfumed as a milliner," who excited the impatience of Hotspur. *As a fair wife*, corresponds to *more than a spinster*, in the conclusion of the sentence. I throw out my hint for the leading or misleading of future editors.

I can not help remarking that Colonel Mitchell, in his noble Life of Wallenstein, seems to have no better opinion of the "arithmeticians" of Shakespeare's day than Iago. George Basta, the celebrated tactician, was contemporary with Shakespeare. Wallenstein served under him, and Colonel Mitchell makes somewhat the same complaint of the want of preferment of his hero as the disappointed ancient. "As to George Basta," he says, "if we may judge of him by his system of tactics, which was then exactly what Saldera's is now, and which, when the object of such a system is considered, must be looked upon as second only, in feebleness and insufficiency, to the one followed in our own time, he was not a likely person to appreciate talent, or to encourage and call forth genius." Nor, indeed, is the Colonel very complimentary to the army to which Iago belongs. He calls them "the worthless mercenaries of Venice, troops constantly kept in a state of mutiny and insufficiency, by the ignorant fears of their despicable government."— W. M. [Some of the critics have suggested that for "fair wife," the words "fair face" should be adopted. Tyrwhitt's reading of "fair *life*" (reference having been with respect to Cassio's "daily beauty in his life") is noticed above. Hanmer would have it *phyz* or *guise*, alluding to Cassio's style of dress. Coleridge approved of the line running—

"A fellow almost damned in a fair life,"

in the belief that it expressed Iago's contempt for all that did not display intellectual power. Steevens, determined to strike out something new, interprets the disputed line as meaning that Cassio is almost ruined by being nearly married to a frail beauty. In Act IV., scene 1, Iago speaks to Cassio of the love borne for him by Bianca [an impure], and says, "'Faith, the cry goes, that you shall marry her." Cassio's reply is, "This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise," adds that he must leave her company, but, with his constitutional weakness, immediately after lets her take away Desdemona's handkerchief, and promises to go and sup with her.] — M.

> As masterly as he; mere prattle without practice,
> Is all his soldiership."

It is an insult hard to be borne, as many an H. P. will be ready to testify. We will find in many professional periodical works the complaint reiterated, that—

> "There's no remedy, 'tis the curse of service:
> Preferment goes by letter and affection,
> Not by old gradation, where each second
> Stood heir to the first;"

and many a curse, loud and deep, is inflicted, on that account, upon the Horse-Guards and Admiralty, who fortunately have no individual responsibilities on which the disappointed ancients can fasten. I am sure that no British soldier or sailor would carry his anger farther than a passing growl, but the example of Bellingham* shows, that even in our assassin-hating nation, a feeling of injustice done by a superior, will drive a man to satiate his vengeance even upon those who have not done him wrong.

In the country of Iago, whether from his name we conclude it to be Spain, or from his service, Italy, none of the scruples, or rather principles, which actuate or restrain English gentlemen, existed. Least of all were they to be found in the motley armies of adventurers gathered from all quarters, the outcasts

> ———"of all foreign lands,
> Unclaimed by town or tribe, to whom belongs
> Nothing, except the universal sun;"†

and Iago could not be expected to be very scrupulous as to his method of compassing his revenge. But how effect it? He is obliged to admit that Othello's standing in the state is too important to render it possible that public injury could be done to him. He is well aware that

* He assassinated Spencer Percival, the Prime Minister, in 1812.—M.

† Schiller. The Piccolomini, Act IV., scene 5.

"the state
* * * * *
Can not with safety cast him; he's embarked
With such loud reasons to the Cyprus war,
Which e'en now stands in act, that for their souls
Another of his fathom they have not
To lead their business."

In his unhoused condition no point of vantage presented itself whence harm could be wrought. Just then, when Iago's heart was filled with rage, and his head busily but vainly occupied in devising means for avenging himself on the man by whom that rage was excited, just then *Até*, the goddess of Mischief, supplies him with all that deepest malignity could desire, by the hasty, ill-mated, and unlooked-for marriage of Othello. It was a devil-send that the most sanguine spirit could not have anticipated, and Iago clutched it accordingly with passionate eagerness. He was tempted, and he fell.

When he first conceived his hatred against Othello, he had no notion that it would be pushed to such dire extremity. Revenge is generally accompanied by vanity, indeed there must be always a spice of vanity in a revengeful disposition. He who so keenly feels and deeply resents personal injury or affront, must set no small value upon himself. The proud are seldom revengeful—the great, never. We accordingly find that Iago engages in his hostilities against Othello, more to show his talents than for any other purpose. He proudly lauds his own powers of dissimulation, which are to be now displayed with so much ability.

"When my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am."*

* Can these last words be intended as a somewhat profane allusion to the title by which the Almighty reveals himself to Moses? Exod. iii. 14. I AM THAT I AM is the name of the God of truth. *I am not what I am* is, therefore, a fitting description of a premeditated liar.—W. M.

He fancies himself superior to all around in art and knowledge of the world. Roderigo is a mere gull:—

> "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
> For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
> If I should time expend with *such a snipe*,
> But for my sport and profit."

Cassio he considers to be not merely unskilled in war, but a fool:—

> "For while *this honest fool*
> Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes," &c.

Othello is an ass in his estimation:—

> "The Moor is of a free and open nature,
> That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
> And will as tenderly be led by the nose
> *As asses are.*"

The "*inclining*" Desdemona he utterly despises, as one who fell in love with the Moor merely for his bragging, and telling fantastical lies. His wife he calls a fool; and, with these opinions of his great superiority of wisdom and intellect, he commences operations to enmesh them all, as if they were so many puppets. It would be a strange thing indeed, he reflects, if I were to permit myself to be insulted, and my rights withheld, by such a set of idiots, whom I can wind round my finger as I please.

He seated him in the seat of the scorner, a character which he who is accounted the wisest of men continually opposes to that of true wisdom. "Seest thou," says Solomon, in the Proverbs copied out by the men of Hezekiah, King of Judea, which, whether they be inspired or not, are aphorisms of profound and concentrated wisdom,—"seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."* And

* Prov. xxvi. 12. "The scorner is an abomination to men," occurs in chap. xxiv. 9.—W. M.

the career of Iago ends with his own destruction, amid the abomination set down in another chapter of Proverbs as the lot of the scorner. The jealousy of Othello is not more gradually and skilfully raised and developed than the vengeance of Iago At first angry enough, no doubt; but he has no defined project He follows the Moor to take advantage of circumstances to turn them to his own use. Nothing of peculiar malignity is thought upon: if he can get Cassio's place, he will be satisfied.

> "Cassio's a proper man; let me see now,
> To get his place——"

The marriage and the sight of Desdemona point out to him a ready way of accomplishing this object. The thought occurs suddenly, and he is somewhat startled at first. He asks himself with eager repetition,

> "How? how?"

and pauses to think—

> "Let me see——"

It is soon settled.

> "After some time, to abuse Othello's ear,
> That he is too familiar with his wife."

But it still alarms him:—

> "I have it—it's engendered: Hell and night
> Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light."

The plot is not matured even when they all arrive at Cyprus.

> "'Tis here, but yet confused—
> Knavery's plain face is never seen till used."

When once fairly entered upon, however, it progresses with unchecked rapidity. He is himself hurried resistlessly forward by the current of deceit and iniquity in which he has embarked. He is as much a tool or passive instrument as those whom he is using as such.*

* Mr. Verplanck notices that Iago was only twenty-eight years of age (he says, "I have looked upon the world for four times seven years") and says,

Some critics pronounce his character unnatural, as not having sufficient motive for the crimes he commits. This is not wise. He could not help committing them. Merely to put money in his purse, he gulled Roderigo into a belief that he could assist the poor dupe in his suit to Desdemona. There is no remarkable crime in this. Nor can we blame him for being angry at being somewhat scornfully passed over; we can, at all events, enter into his feelings when he wishes to undermine one whom he considers unworthily preferred to him, and to obtain a place which he thinks should be his own, if patronage had been justly dispensed. It was a base thing, indeed, to malign a lady, and possess her husband with jealousy; but he could not have calculated on the harvest of death and crime which the seed of suspicion that he was sowing was destined to bring up. When he makes Cassio drunk, he only anticipates that he will put him in such action as may offend the isle. When framing the device that is to destroy the lieutenant, no thoughts of murder arise before him.

He has no regard for the feelings of Othello, but dreams not that he will kill Desdemona, whom he says he loves. As for the lady herself, his low estimation of woman would, of course, lead him to think but little about her peace and quiet. He excuses himself, besides, by referring to the rumor that Othello

"the incidents of Iago's youth seem to add much to the individuality and intensity of the character. An old soldier of acknowledged merit, who, after years of service, sees a young man like Cassio placed over his head, has not a little to plead in justification of deep resentment, and in excuse, though not in defence, of his revenge: such a man may well brood over imaginary wrongs. The caustic sarcasm and contemptuous estimate of mankind are at least pardonable in a soured and disappointed veteran. But in a young man the revenge is more purely gratuitous — the hypocrisy, the knowledge, the dexterous management of the worst and weakest parts of human nature, the recklessness of moral feeling — even the stern, bitter wit, intellectual and contemptuous, without any of the gayety of youth — are all precocious and peculiar, separating Iago from the ordinary sympathies of our nature, and investing him with higher talent and blacker guilt." — M.

had given him cause to be jealous. It is plain that he does not pretend to lay any great stress upon this; nor can we suppose that, even if it were true, it would deeply affect him; but he thinks light of women in general, and has no respect whatever for his wife. Indeed, Othello does not hold Emilia in much esteem; and her own conversation with Desdemona, as she is undressing her for bed (Act IV. Scene 3), shows that her virtue was not impregnable. The injury, therefore, Iago was about to do Desdemona, in lessening her in the respect of her husband by accusing her of such an ordinary offence as a deviation from chastity, and one which *he* did not visit with any particular severity on his own wife, must have seemed trivial. He could not have been prepared for the dire tempest of fury which his first hint of her unfaithfulness aroused in the bosom of Othello. Up to that moment he had done nothing more than gull a blockhead, and endeavor by unworthy means to undermine a rival; trickery and slander, though not very honorable qualities are not of such rare occurrence in the world as to call for the expression of any peculiar indignation, when we find them displayed by a clever and plotting Italian.*

* Dr. Johnson's remarks on the three leading characters of Othello show force as well as discrimination. One paragraph may be quoted here:— "The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence; her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected; are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is in vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to inflame him, are so artfully natural, that though it will not, perhaps, be said of him, as he says of himself, that he is a man 'not easily jealous,' yet we can not but pity him when at last we find him 'perplexed in the extreme.' There is always danger lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, would steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation: but the character of Iago is so conducted that he is, from the first scene to the last, hated and despised."—M.

They have, however, led him to the plain and wide path of damnation. He can not retract his insinuations. Even if he desired, Othello will not let him:—

"Villain, be sure you prove my love a whore."

[We may observe that he still, though his suspicions are so fiercely roused, calls her his *love*.* It is for the last time before her death. After her guilt is, as he thinks, proved, he has no word of affection for her. She is a convicted culprit, to be sacrificed to his sense of justice.]

"Be sure of it: give me ocular proof:
Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath.
* * * * *
Make me to see 't, or, at the least, so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge, no loop
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!"

Iago, therefore, had no choice but to go forward. He was evidently not prepared for this furious outburst; and we may acquit him of hypocrisy when he prays Othello to let her live. But Cassio must die:—

"He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly."

A more urgent reason immediately suggests itself:—

"And besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril.
No—he must die."

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* There is an assertion by Coleridge, that the passion of Othello is *not* jealousy. De Quincey, who declares that this opinion was enunciated in Coleridge's Lectures at the Royal Institution, adopts it and adds, with eloquence and truth, "To me it is evident that Othello's state of feeling was not that of a degrading, suspicious rivalship, but the state of perfect misery, arising out of this dilemma, the most affecting, perhaps, to contemplate of any which *can* exist, viz.: the dire necessity of loving without limit one whom the heart pronounces to be unworthy of that love." There is a great deal of reflection in the result thus reached.—M.

The death of Desdemona involves that of Roderigo:—

> "Live Roderigo?
> He calls me to a restitution large
> Of gold and jewels, that I bobb'd from him
> As gifts to Desdemona.
> *It must not be.*"

Here is the direct agency of necessity. He *must* remove these men. Shortly after, to silence the clamorous testimony of his wife, he *must* kill her. He is doomed to blood.* [As some other considerations on this point occur to us, we will defer the conclusion of our remarks on the character of Iago, and reserve them for another paper.]†

* The character of Iago is one of the supererogations of Shakespeare's genius. Some persons, more nice than wise, have thought this whole character unnatural, because his villainy is *without a sufficient motive*. Shakespeare, who was as good a philosopher as he was a poet, thought otherwise. . . . . Iago in fact belongs to a class of characters common to Shakespeare, and at the same time peculiar to him; whose heads are as acute and active as their hearts are hard and callous. . . . . The general groundwork of the character, however, is not absolute malignity, but a want of moral principle, or an indifference to the real consequences of the actions, which the meddling perversity of his disposition, and love of immediate excitement, lead him to commit. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life, and instead of exercising his ingenuity on imaginary characters, or long-forgotten incidents, he takes the bolder and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connections, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution. The character is a complete abstraction of the intellectual from the moral being; or, in other words, consists in an absorption of every common feeling in the virulence of his understanding, the deliberate wilfulness of his purposes, and his restless, untameable love of mischievous contrivance. In the general dialogue and reflections, which are an accompaniment to the progress of the catastrophe, there is a constant overflowing of gall and bitterness. The acuteness of his malice fastens upon every thing alike, and pursues the most distant analogy of evil with provoking sagacity. His mirth is not natural and cheerful, but forced and extravagant, partaking of the intense activity of mind and cynical contempt of others in which it originates. Iago is not, like Candide, a believer in optimism, but seems to have a thorough hatred or distrust of every thing of the kind, and to dwell with gloating satisfaction on whatever can interrupt the enjoyment of others, and gratify his moody irritability.—Hazlitt.

† This second paper on Iago was never published.—M.

No. VIII.—LADY MACBETH.

"Then gently scan your brother man,
More gently sister woman."—BURNS.

"Je donne mon avis, non comme bon, mais comme mien."
MONTAIGNE.

THE ladies of Shakespeare have, of course, riveted the attention, and drawn to them the sympathies, of all who have read or seen his plays. The book-trained critic, weighing words and sentences in his closet; the romantic poet, weaving his verses by grove or stream; the polished occupant of the private box; the unwashed brawler of the gallery; the sedate visitant of the pit—are touched each in his several way by the conjugal devotion and melancholy fate of Desdemona, the high-souled principle of Isabella, the enthusiastic love and tragic end of Juliet, the maternal agonies of Constance, the stern energies of Margaret of Anjou, the lofty resignation of Katharine, the wit and romance of Rosalind, frolic of tongue, but deeply feeling at heart; the accomplished coquetries of Cleopatra, redeemed and almost sanctified by her obedient rushing to welcome death at the call ringing in her ears from the grave of her self-slain husband; the untiring affection of Imogen, Ophelia's stricken heart and maddened brain, or the filial constancy of Cordelia. Less deeply marked, but all in their kind beautiful, are the inno-

cence of Miranda, the sweetness of Anne Page, the meek bearing — beneath the obtrusion of undesired honors — of Anne Boleyn, the playful fondness of Jessica: but I should run through all the catalogue of Shakespeare's plays were I to continue the enumeration. The task is unnecessary, for they dwell in the hearts of all, of every age, and sex, and condition. They nestle in the bosoms of the wise and the simple, the sedentary and the active, the moody and the merry, the learned and the illiterate, the wit of the club, the rustic of the farm, the soldier in camp, the scholar in college; and it affords a remarkable criterion of their general effect, that, even in those foreign countries which, either from imperfect knowledge, defective taste, or national prejudice, set little value on the plays of Shakespeare — while Hamlet, Richard, Macbeth, King John, Lear, and Falstaff, are unknown or rejected — the names of Desdemona and Juliet are familiar as household words.

No writer ever created so many female characters, or placed them in situations of such extreme diversity; and in none do we find so lofty an appreciation of female excellence. The stories from which the great dramatists of Athens drew their plots were, in most of their striking incidents, derogatory to woman. The tale of Troy divine, the war of Thebes, the heroic legends, were their favorite, almost their exclusive sources; and the crimes, passions, and misfortunes, of Clytemnestra and Medea, Phædra and Jocastra, could only darken the scene. An adulterous spouse aiding in the murder of her long-absent lord, the king of men, returning crowned with conquest; a daughter participating in the ruthless avenging by death inflicted on a mother by a son; an unpitying sorceress killing her children to satiate rage against her husband; a faithless wife endeavoring to force her shameless love on her step-son, and by false accusation consigning him for his refusal to destruction beneath his father's curse; a melancholy queen linked in incestuous nup-

tials to her own offspring: these ladies are the heroines of the most renowned of the Greek tragedies! and the consequences of their guilt or misfortune compose the fable of many more. In some of the Greek plays, as the Eumenides, we have no female characters except the unearthly habitants of heaven or hell; in the most wondrous of them all, Prometheus Fettered, appears only the mythic Io; in the Persians, only the ghost of Atossa, who scarcely appertains to womankind: in some, as Philoctetes, women form no part of the *dramatis personæ;* in others, as the Seven against Thebes, they are of no importance to the action of the piece; or, as in the Suppliants, serve but as the Chorus; and, in many more, are of less than secondary importance. Euripides often makes them the objects of those ungallant reflections which consign the misogynic dramatist to such summary punishment from the irritated sex in the comedies of Aristophanes; and in the whole number, in the thirty-three plays extant, there are but two women who can affect our nobler or softer emotions. The tender and unremitting care of Antigone for her blind, forlorn, and aged father, her unbending determination to sacrifice her lover and her life sooner than fail in paying funeral honors to her fallen brother; and, in Alcestis, her resolute urging that her own life should be taken to preserve that of a beloved husband — invest them with a pathetic and heroic beauty. But, in the one, we are haunted by the horrid recollections of incest and fratricide; and, in the other, we are somewhat indignant that we should be forced to sympathize with an affection squandered upon so heartless a fellow as Admetus, who suffers his wife to perish in his stead with the most undisturbed conviction of the superior value of his own existence, pouring forth all the while the most melodious lamentations over her death, but never for a moment thinking of coming forward to prevent it. They are beautiful creations, nevertheless.

The Greek dramatists were in a great measure bound to a particular class of subjects; but, in general, the manner in which an author treats the female character, affords one of the main criteria by which the various gradations of genius may be estimated. By the highest genius, woman is always spoken of with a deep feeling of the most reverential delicacy. Helen is the cause of the war immortalized by the Iliad; but no allusion to her lapse is made throughout the poem save by herself, deploring in bitter accents what she has done. She wishes that she had died an evil death before she followed Paris; she acknowledges herself to be unworthy of the kindred of those whom she describes as deserving of honor; her conscience suggests that her far-famed brothers, "whom one mother bore," are in the field when the warring chieftains meet in truce, but dare not show themselves among their peers through shame of the disgrace she has entailed upon them; and, at the last, she lays bare her internal feeling that insult is the lot she deserves by the warm gratitude with which she acknowledges, in her bitter lament over the corse of Hector, that he had the generosity never to address her with upbraiding. The wrath of Achilles is roused for the injury inflicted upon him by carrying off Briseis, dear to his heart, "spear-captured as she was." She is restored by the penitent Agamemnon, with solemn vows that she returns pure and uninsulted. Of Andromache I think it unnecessary to speak. In the Odyssey, it is true, we have Circe and Calypso; but they are goddesses couching with a mortal, and excite no human passion. We meet them in the region of "*speciosa miracula*," where Cyclops, and Sirius, and Lotus-eaters, dwell; where the King of the Winds holds his court, and whence is the passage to Erebus. In that glorious mixture of adventure and allegory, the Voyage of Ulysses, we may take those island-beauties to be the wives and sweethearts whom sailors meet in

every port; or, following the stream of moralists and commentators, look upon the fable to be no more than

"Truth severe in fairy fiction dressed."

In other parts of the poem we might wish for more warm-heartedness in Penelope; but under her circumstances caution is excusable, and she must be admitted to be a pattern of constancy and devotion. The Helen of the Odyssey is a fine continuation of the Helen of the Iliad. Still full of kindly feminine impulses, still sorrowing when she thinks of the misfortunes she has occasioned, her griefs have lost the intense poignancy with which they afflicted her while leading a life degrading her in her own eyes, and exposing her to affronts of which she could not complain. Restored to the husband of her early affections, consoled by his pardon, and dwelling once more amid the scenes of her youth — absence from which, and absence so occasioned, she had never ceased to regret in wasting floods of tears — the Helen of the Odyssey comes before us no longer uttering the accents of ceaseless self-reproach, but soothed, if not pacified in soul. We have the *lull* after the tempest — the calm following the whirlwind.

Virgil is a great poet indeed, though few will now agree with Scaliger that he is equal, far less superior, to Homer. Dido is the blot upon the Æneid. The loves of the Carthaginian queen might have made, and in the hands of Virgil would have made, a charming poem, treated separately — a poem far superior in execution to the Hero and Leander of Musæus, but a work of the same order. As it stands, the episode, if it can be so called, utterly ruins the epic character of the hero. St. Evremond has said that Æneas had all the qualities of a monk; it is plain that he had not the feelings of a gentleman; and we can not wonder that his first wife wandered from his side, and that he met with so violent an opposition when he sought another. Virgil, after

his conduct to Dido, had not the courage to introduce him to Lavinia in person, and leaves him undefended to the angry tongue of her mother. The poet was justly punished for his fourth book; for, in all those which follow, he has not ventured to introduce any female characters but incendiaries, sibyls, shrews, and furies.

When Dante took Virgil as his guide in the infernal regions, he did not follow his master in dwelling on the pleasures or the gentler sorrows of illicit love. His ghostly women appear stern, or subdued of port. The lady who is best known to the English reader, Francesca di Rimini, forms no exception. Nothing can be more grave and solemn than the tale of her hapless passion, as told in the Inferno. It is pervaded throughout by such sorrow and remorse as we might expect to find in a region whence hope is excluded. Accordingly, how far different is its impression from that left on the mind by the same story when told merely as a love-tale by Mr. Leigh Hunt! I do not say this in disparagement of that picturesque and graphic poem, the Story of Rimini, which has been exposed to the most unjustifiable criticism, but to mark the manner in which men of talent and men of genius handle the same subject. The ladies of Tasso, though not vigorously sketched, and in general imitated from the Latin poets — I speak of his Jerusalem — are conceived in a spirit of romantic chivalry; and, even when the witching Armida leads Rinaldo astray, the poet diverts our attention from the blandishments of the enchantress to dazzle us by the wonders of magic groves and gardens. Poor Tasso, besides, wishes to persuade us — perhaps in some moody hours he had persuaded himself — that he intended the whole poem for an allegory, in which Armida was to play some edifying part — I forget what. In the poets of romance we do not look for the severer style of the epic; but the forest-ranging heroines of Ariosto and Spenser, "roaming the woodland, frank and free,"

have an air of self-confiding independence and maiden freshness, worthy of the leafy scenes through which they move, that renders it impossible to approach them with other thoughts than those of chivalrous deference. If Spenser, in his canto of Jealousy, makes the lady of the victim of that weak passion treat her husband as he had anticipated, why, she errs with no man of mortal mould, but chooses as her mates the jolly satyrs wonning in the wood; and Spenser has his allegory too. Ariosto took no trouble to make explanations, being satisfied, I suppose, with the character given of his poetry by Cardinal Hippolyto; and even he has the grace to beg the ladies, to whose service he had from the beginning dedicated his lays, to avert their eyes when he is about to sing the strange adventures of Giocondo.*

* Orlando Furioso, canto xxii., st. 1, 2, 3.

I.

"Donne, e voi che le donne avete in pregio,
Per Dio, non date a questa istoria orecchia,
A questa che 'l ostier dire in dispregio,
E in vostra infamia e biasmo s'apparecchia;
Benche ne macchia vi puo dar ne fregio
Lingua si vile; e sia l'usanza vecchia,
Che 'l volgare ignorante ognun riprenda,
E parle piu de quel meno intenda.

II.

"Lasciate questo canto, che senz' esso
Puo star l'istoria, e non sara men chiara;
Mettendolo Turpino, anch' io l' ò messo,
Non per malevolenzia, ne per gara;
Ch' io v' ami oltre mia lingua che l' a expresso,
Che mai non fu di celebrarvi avara,
N' ò falto mille prove, e v' o dimostro
Ch' io son ne potrei esser se non vostro.

III.

"Passi chi vuol tre carte, o quattro, senza
Leggerne verso, e chi pur legge vuole
Gli dia quella medesima credenza,
Che si vuol dare a finzion, e a fole," &c.

The theme of Milton in Paradise Lost hardly admits of the development of ordinary human feelings; but his sole Eve has grace in all her steps, and all her actions too. In Paradise Regained, his subject was badly chosen; and he feared, from religious motives, to introduce the Virgin. In Comus, his Lady is a model of icy chastity, worthy of the classic verse in which she is embalmed; but Dalilah, in Samson Agonistes, is the more

—Which thus may be rollingly Englished:—

> Ladies, and you to whom ladies are dear,
> For God's sake don't lend to this story an ear!
> Care not for fables of slander or blame
> Which this scandalous chronicler flings on your name.
> Spots that can stain you with slight or with wrong
> Can not be cast by so worthless a tongue.
> Well is it known, as an usage of old,
> That the ignorant vulgar will ever be bold—
> Satire and censure still scattering, and
> Talking the most where they least understand.
> Passed over unread let this canto remain;
> Without it the story will be just as plain.
> As Turpin has put it, so *I* put it too;
> But not from ill feeling, dear ladies, to you.
> My love to your sex has been shown in my lays;
> To you I have never been niggard of praise;
> And many a proof I have given which secures
> That I am, and can never be other than yours.
> Skip three or four pages, and read not a word;
> Or, if you *will* read it, pray deem it absurd—
> As a story in credit not better or worse
> Than the foolish old tales you were told by the nurse.

I do not mean to defend my doggrel; but I think Ariosto has not yet had an adequate translator in English, or indeed in any language; nor, in my opinion, will he easily find one. The poem is too long, and requires the aid of the music of the original language to carry the reader through. I do not know what metre in English could contend against the prolixity; but I *do* know that Ariosto sadly wants—as what classic in the vernacular languages does not?—a better critic of his text than he has yet found, in Italian.

In the above passage it is somewhat amusing to find Ariosto assuring his readers that they might pass this particular canto, because without it "*puo star l'istoria;*" as if there were a canto in the whole poem of which the same might not be said!—W. M.

dramatic conception. Ornate and gay, she makes urgent court to her angry husband, with no better fate than to be by him inexorably repelled. She presses upon him all the topics that could lead to reconciliation, but the sense of his wrongs is too acute to allow of pardon; and at last she bursts away with the consoling reflection that, though spurned by him, and made the object of reproach in Israelitish songs, she shall be hymned and honored in those of her own country as a deliverer. Milton was unhappy in his wives and daughters; and his domestic manners appear to have been harsh and unamiable. In his prose-works — his Tetrachordon, for example — he does not display any kindly feeling for the sex; but when he clothed himself in his singing-robes, and soared above the cares of every-day life, to expatiate in the purer regions of poetry, the soul of the poet softened and sublimed; like his own Adam, his sterner nature relented; and, though he could not make Samson pardon Dalilah, he will not let her depart unhonored. In Paradise Lost he had spoken of her disparagingly :—

> "So rose the Danite strong,
> Herculean Samson, from the harlot lap
> Of Philistæan Dalilah" —

but when she comes before him, as it were, in bodily presence, he leaves all the words of reproach to her irritated lord, and suggests to her topics of self-justification, dismissing her from the stage, not as a faithless wife, but as an heroic woman, who had sacrificed her affections to her country, and who retires after humiliating herself in vain to reap the reward of her patriotic conduct among her people and her kindred.

If we turn from the epic and tragic to the other departments of literature in which genius can be exercised, we shall find the feeling much the same. Those who write from observation of what is going on in the world — the novelist, the comic-writer, the satirist — must take the world as it is, and lay it before us

in its mixture of good and evil. There is no need, however, that the latter should be forcibly thrust upon us. The task of the satirists appears to me the lowest in which talent can be employed. The most famous among them, Juvenal, tells us truly that the *rigidi censura cachinni*—the part chosen by Democritus—is easy to any one. We must rise above it, as he has done in some of his satires—as in that sublime poem in which the passage occurs (the tenth, or the thirteenth and fourteenth)—and forget the wit or the censor, to assume the loftier bearing of the moralist. I should have wondered that the same mind which produced these noble effusions could have perpetrated the enormities of the sixth satire and some others, if I did not reflect that Rome, originally an asylum for robbers, was nothing more than a standing camp, with the virtues and vices, the manners and the feelings of a camp, to the day of its downfall. Rape and violence procured its first women, and it would seem as if the original act had influenced their feelings to the sex throughout. It is certain that theirs is the only literature in the world in which no female character is delineated worthy of the slightest recollection—a striking circumstance, and well deserving critical investigation; but it would now lead us too far from our subject, from which indeed I have delayed too long already. We must get back to Shakespeare, staying only to remark that if Boccaccio and his imitator, Chaucer, have intermingled licentious tales in their miscellaneous collection, they have done so only in compliance with the supposed necessity of delineating every species of life, and that they hasten to show that they could be of finer spirit when emancipated from the thraldom of custom; that Cervantes chequers the comic of Don Quixote with visions of graceful and romantic beauty; and that such will be found to be the case more or less in every composition that takes firm hold of the human mind. I except, of course, works of morals, science, and philosophy; and under

those heads must come the unromantic and unpoetic books of wit, and even buffoonery, if they be doomed to last. Rabelais will live for ever to speak vocally to the intelligent; but mere licentiousness must perish. Indulgence in woman-scorning ribaldry inflicts due punishment upon talent itself, if it be prostituted to such miserable work. The melancholy ability which has been so successful in La Pucelle affords a sufficient reason why its author failed when he attempted a Henriade.

Supereminent over all the great geniuses of the world — and with no others have I compared him — is Shakespeare in his women. Homer was not called upon to introduce them in such number or variety, nor could they enter so intimately into the action of his poems. Still less was there opportunity for their delineation in Milton. But Shakespeare's is the unique merit that, being a dramatist wielding equally the highest tragic and the lowest comic, and therefore compelled to bring females prominently forward in every variety of circumstance, he has carefully avoided themes and situations which might inspire either horror or disgust, or excite licentious feeling. We have in him no Phædra, Clytemnestra, or Medea; no story like those of Jocasta, or Monimia, or the Mysterious Mother. He would have recoiled from what is hinted at in Manfred. Even the Myrrha of Sardanapalus could not have found a place among his heroines. In none of his plots, comic or tragic, does female frailty form an ingredient. The only play in which ladies have been betrayed is Measure for Measure; and there he takes care that their misfortune shall be amended, by marrying Mariana to Angelo, and ordering Claudio to restore honor to Julietta, whom he had wronged. No where else does a similar example occur, and there it is set in strong contrast with the high-toned purity of Isabella. In the instances of slandered women, it seems to delight him to place them triumphant over their slanderers; as Hero in Much Ado about Nothing, Hermione in the

Winter's Tale, Imogen in Cymbeline. All his heroes woo with the most honorable views; there is no intrigue in any of his plays, no falsehood to the married-bed. Those who offer illicit proposals are exposed to ruin and disgrace. Angelo falls from his lofty station. Prince John is driven from his brother's court. Falstaff, the wit and courtier, becomes a butt, when his evil star leads him to make lawless courtship to the Wives of Windsor. The innocent and natural love of Miranda in the Tempest affords a striking contrast to the coarse and disgusting passion of Dorinda: a character thrust into the play as an improvement by no less a man than Dryden. Here again we may remark how great is the distance which separates genius of the first order even from that which comes nearest to it. The two most detestable women ever drawn by Shakespeare—Regan and Goneril—are both in love with Edmund; but we have no notice of their passion until the moment of their death, and then we find that, wicked as were the thoughts which rankled in their bosoms, no infringement of the laws of chastity was contemplated; marriage was their intention: "I was contracted to them both," says Edmund; "all three now marry in an instant." With his dying breath he bears testimony that in the midst of their crimes they were actuated by the dominant feeling of woman:—

> "Yet Edmund was beloved;
> The one the other poisoned for his sake,
> And after slew herself."

Emilia is accused by Iago, in soliloquy, as being suspected of faithlessness to his bed, but he obviously does not believe the charge:—

> "I hate the Moor;
> And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
> He has done my office; *I know not if 't be true,*
> But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
> Will do as if for surety."

He uses it merely as an additional excuse for hating the Moor; a palliation to his conscience in the career which he is about to pursue. Queen Gertrude's marriage with her brother-in-law is made the subject of severe animadversion; but it does not appear that she had dishonored herself in the life of her first husband, or was in any manner participant in the crime of Claudius. Hamlet, in the vehemence of his anger, never insinuates such a charge; and the Ghost, rising to moderate his violence, acquits her, by his very appearance at such a time, of any heinous degree of guilt. As for the gross theory of Tieck respecting Ophelia, it is almost a national insult. He maintains that she had yielded to Hamlet's passion, and that its natural consequences had driven her to suicide. Such a theory is in direct opposition to the retiring and obedient purity of her character, the tenor of her conversations and soliloquies, the general management of the play, and what I have endeavored to show is the undeviating current of Shakespeare's ideas. If the German critic propounded this heresy to insult English readers through one of their greatest favorites in revenge for the ungallant reason which the Archbishop of Canterbury,* in Henry V., assigns as the origin of the Salique law, he might be pardoned; but, as it is plainly dictated by a spirit of critical wickedness and blasphemy, I should consign him, in spite of his learning, acuteness, and Shakespearian knowledge, without compassion, to the avenging hands of Lysistrata.†

* Henry V., act i., sc. 2. Archbishop Chicheley's argument is —

> "The land Salique lies in Germany,
> Between the floods of Sala and of Elbe,
> Where Charles the Great, having subdued the Saxons,
> There left behind and settled certain French,
> *Who, holding in disdain the German women*
> *For some dishonest manners of their life,*
> Established there this law, to wit, no female
> Should be inheritrix in Salique land."

† Aristoph. Lysistr.

Such, in the plays where he had to create the characters, was the course of Shakespeare. In the historical plays, where he had to write by the book, it is not at all different. Scandal is carefully avoided. Many spots lie on the fame of Queen Elinor, but no reference is made to them by the hostile tongue which describes the mother-queen as a second Até, stirring her son, King John, to blood and strife. Jane Shore, of whom Rowe, a commentator on Shakespeare too, made a heroine, is not introduced on the stage in Richard III. Poor Joan of Arc is used brutally, it must be owned; but it is not till she is driven to the stake that she confesses to an infirmity which not even her barbarous judges can seriously believe. We must observe, besides, that the first part of Henry VI. can scarcely be considered a play of Shakespeare, for he did little more than revise the old play of that name.* To the charge of the older dramatists, too, must be set the strange exhibition of Margaret of Anjou mourning over the head of the Duke of Suffolk in the second part. When Shakespeare has that vigorous woman to himself, as in Richard III., she shows no traces of such weakness; she is the heroic asserter of her husband's rights, the unsubdued but not-to-be-comforted mourner over her foully-slaughtered son. He makes the scenes of the civil wars sad enough; the father kills the son, the son the father, under the eyes of the pitying king; but there is no hint of outrage on women. He contrives to interest us equally in Katharine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. Every thing that poetry can do, is done, to make us forget the faults of Cleopatra, and to incline us to think that a world was well lost for that *petit nez retroussé*.

* Collier thinks it "most likely that the first part of Henry VI. was founded upon a previous play, although none such has been brought to light." He refers to Henslow's Diary for proof that, although no such drama has come down to us, "there was a play called Harry the VI. acted on the 3d March, 1591–2, and so popular as to have been repeated twelve times. This was, perhaps, the piece which Shakespeare subsequently altered and improved."—M.

We should in vain search the writings of the Romans themselves for such Roman ladies as those of Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar. In his camps and armies we have much military tumult and railing, but no where the introduction of licentious scenes. If Alcibiades be attended by his Phrynia and Timandra, and Falstaff have his poll clawed like a parrot by Doll Tearsheet, the Athenian ladies are introduced as a vehicle for the fierce misanthropy of Timon; and the fair one of Eastcheap acts as a satire upon the impotent desires of the withered elder, the dead elm, whom she clasps in her venal embraces. They are drawn in their true colors: no attempt is made to bedeck them with sentimental graces—to hold them up to sympathetic admiration with the maudlin novelist, or to exhibit them as "interesting young females" with the police-reporter. They lift not their brazen fronts in courts and palaces; in obscure corners they ply their obscene trade. We know that it is their vocation, and dismiss them from our minds. There is no corruption to be feared from the example of the inmates of Mr. Overdone's establishment or Mrs. Quickly's tavern. Shakespeare exhibits only one fallen lady in all his plays—and she is Cressida. But Troilus and Cressida deserve a separate paper, if for no other reason, yet because it is a play in which Shakespeare has handled the same characters as Homer. It is worth while to consider in what points these greatest of poets agree, and in what they differ.

Such, then, is the female character as drawn in Shakespeare. It is pure, honorable, spotless—ever ready to perform a kind action—never shrinking from a heroic one. Gentle and submissive where duty or affection bids—firm and undaunted in resisting the approaches of sin, or shame, or disgrace; constant in love through every trial; faithful and fond in all the great relations of life, as wife, as daughter, as sister, as mother, as friend; witty or refined, tender or romantic, lofty or gay; her

failings shrouded, her good and lovely qualities brought into the brightest light—she appears in the pages of the mighty dramatist as if she were the cherished daughter of a fond father, the idolized mistress of an adoring lover, the very goddess of a kneeling worshipper. I have catalogued most of the female names which adorn the plays. One is absent from the list. She is absent—the dark lady of that stupendous work which, since the Eumenides, bursting upon the stage with appalling howl in quest of the fugitive Orestes, electrified with terror the Athenian audience, has met no equal.* I intend to maintain that Lady Macbeth, too, is human in heart and impulse—that she is not meant to be an embodiment of the Furies.†

* Schlegel had previously made the same remark. His words are, "Since *The Eumenedés* of Æschylus, nothing so grand and terrible has ever been written."—M.

† Schlegel's view of Lady Macbeth's character is the popular one, and adverse to the woman. He says, "A monstrous crime is committed: Duncan, a venerable old man, and the best of kings, is, in defenceless sleep, under the hospitable roof, murdered by his subject, whom he has loaded with honors and rewards. Natural motives alone seem inadequate, or the perpetrator must have been portrayed as a hardened villain. Shakespeare wished to exhibit a more sublime picture: an ambitious but noble hero, yielding to a deep-laid hellish temptation; and in whom all the crimes to which, in order to secure the fruits of his first crime, he is impelled by necessity, can not altogether eradicate the stamp of native heroism. He has, therefore, given a threefold division to the guilt of that crime. The first idea comes from that being whose whole activity is guided by a lust of wickedness. The weird sisters surprise Macbeth in the moment of intoxication of victory, when his love of glory has been gratified; they cheat his eyes by exhibiting to him as the work of fate what in reality can only be accomplished by his own deed, and gain credence for all their words by the immediate fulfilment of the first prediction. The opportunity of murdering the King immediately offers; the wife of Macbeth conjures him not to let it slip; *she urges him on with a fiery eloquence, which has at command all those sophisms that serve to throw a false splendor over crime. Little more than the mere execution falls to the share of Macbeth; he is driven into it, as it were, in a tumult of fascination.* Repentance immediately follows, nay, even precedes the deed, and the stings of conscience leave him rest neither night nor day. But he is now fairly entangled in the snares of hell; truly frightful is it to behold that same Macbeth, who once as a warrior could spurn at death, now that he dreads the prospect of

Macbeth is the gloomiest of the plays. Well may its hero say that he has supped full of horrors. It opens with the incantations of spiteful witches, and concludes with a series of savage combats, stimulated by quenchless hate on one side, and by the desperation inspired by the consciousness of unpardonable crime on the other. In every act we have blood in torrents. The first man who appears on the stage is the *bleeding* captain. The first word uttered by earthly lips is, "What *bloody* man is that?" The tale which the captain relates is full of fearful gashes, reeking wounds, and *bloody* execution. The murder of Duncan, in the second act, stains the hands of Macbeth so deeply as to render them fit to incarnadine the multitudinous seas, and make

the life to come, clinging with growing anxiety to his earthly existence the more miserable it becomes, and pitilessly removing out of the way whatever to his dark and suspicious mind seems to threaten danger. However much we may abhor his actions, we can not altogether refuse to compassionate the state of his mind; we lament the ruin of so many noble qualities, and even in his last defence we are compelled to admire the struggle of a brave will with a cowardly conscience. We might believe that we witness in this tragedy the over-ruling destiny of the ancients represented in perfect accordance with their ideas: the whole originates in a supernatural influence, to which the subsequent events seem inevitably linked. Moreover, we even find here the same ambiguous oracles which, by their literal fulfilment, deceive those who confide in them. Yet it may be easily shown that the poet has, in his work, displayed more enlightened views. He wishes to show that the conflict of good and evil in this world can only take place by the permission of Providence, which converts the curse that individual mortals draw down on their heads into a blessing to others. An accurate scale is followed in the retaliation. Lady Macbeth, who of all the human participators in the king's murder is the most guilty, is thrown by the terrors of her conscience into a state of incurable bodily and mental disease; she dies, unlamented by her husband, with all the symptoms of reprobation. Macbeth is still found worthy to die the death of a hero on the field of battle. The noble Macduff is allowed the satisfaction of saving his country by punishing with his own hand the tyrant who had murdered his wife and children. Banquo, by an early death, atones for the ambitious curiosity which prompted the wish to know his glorious descendants, as he thereby has roused Macbeth's jealousy; but he preserved his mind pure from the evil suggestions of the witches: his name is blessed in his race, destined to enjoy for a long succession of ages that royal dignity which Macbeth could only hold for his own life.—M.

the green — one red.* His lady imbrues herself in the crimson stream, and gilds the faces of the sleeping grooms with gore. She thus affords a pretence to the thane for slaughtering them in an access of simulated fury.†

> "Their hands and faces were all badged with *blood*,
> So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
> Upon their pillows."

Macbeth carefully impresses the sanguinary scene upon his hearers:—

> "Here lay Duncan,
> His silver skin laced with his golden *blood*,
> And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature
> For ruin's wasteful entrance; there the murderers,
> Steeped in the colors of their trade, their daggers
> Unmannerly breeched in *gore*."

Direful thoughts immediately follow, and the sky itself participates in the horror. The old man who can well remember threescore and ten, during which time he had witnessed dreadful hours and strange things, considers all as mere trifles, compared with the sore night of Duncan's murder:—

> "The heavens,
> Thou seest, as troubled with man's act,
> Threaten his *bloody* stage; by the clock 'tis day,
> And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp."

The horses of Duncan forget their careful training, and their natural instincts, to break their stalls and eat each other. Gloom, ruin, murder, horrible doubts, unnatural suspicions, portents of dread in earth and heaven, surround us on all sides. In the third act, desperate assassins, incensed by the blows and

* Professor Wilson says, "The idea of the murder originated with the male prisoner. We have his wife's word for it — she told him so to his face, and he did not deny it. We have his own word for it — he told himself so to his own face, and he never denies it at any time during the play."—M.

† Holinshed says very little about Lady Macbeth: only this—"But speciallie his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as that she was verie ambitious, burning with unquenchable desire to be a queen."—M.

buffets of the world, weary with disasters, tugged with fortune, willing to wreak their hatred on all mankind, and persuaded that Banquo has been their enemy, set upon and slay him, without remorse and without a word. The prayer of their master to Night, that she would, with

> "*Bloody* and invisible hand,
> Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond"

which kept him in perpetual terror, is in part accomplished; and he who was his enemy in, as he says—

> "Such *bloody* distance,
> That every minute of his being thrusts
> Against my life"—

lies breathless in the dust. The murderers bring the witness of their deed to the very banquet-chamber of the expecting king. They come with *blood* upon the face. The hardened stabber does not communicate the tidings of his exploit in set phrase. He minces not the matter—his language is not culled from any trim and weeded vocabulary; and the king compliments him in return, in language equally vernacular and unrefined:—

> "*Mur.* My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
> *Mac.* Thou art the best o' the cut-throats."

Cheered by this flattering tribute to his merits, the accomplished artist goes on, in all the pride of his profession, to show that he had left no rubs or botches in his work. Macbeth, after a burst of indignation at the escape of Fleance, recurs to the comfortable assurance of Banquo's death, and asks, in the full certainty of an answer in the affirmative—

> "But Banquo 's safe?
> *Mur.* Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
> With twenty trenched gashes on his head;
> The least a death to nature.
> *Mac.* Thanks for that."

Presently the gory locks of Banquo's spectre attest the truth of what the murderer has told, and the banquet breaks up by the flight, rather than the retirement, of the astonished guests; leaving Macbeth dismally, but fiercely, pondering over thoughts steeped in slaughter. The very language of the scene is redolent of blood. The word itself occurs in almost every speech. At the conclusion of the act, come the outspeaking of suspicions hitherto only muttered, and the determination of the Scottish nobles to make an effort which may give to their tables meat, sleep to their eyes, and free their feasts and banquets from those bloody knives, the fatal hue of which haunted them in their very hours of retirement, relaxation, or festival.

The sanguine stain dyes the fourth act as deeply. A head severed from the body, and a bloody child, are the first apparitions that rise before the king at the bidding of the weird sisters. The blood-boltered Banquo is the last to linger upon the stage, and sear the eyes of the amazed tyrant. The sword of the assassin is soon at work in the castle of Macduff; and his wife and children fly from the deadly blow, shrieking "murder" —in vain. And the fifth act—from its appalling commencement, when the sleeping lady plies her hopeless task of nightly washing the blood-stained hand,* through the continual clangor

* Wilson says, "In the Fourth Act—she is not seen at all. But in the Fifth, lo! and behold! and at once we know why she had been absent—we see and are turned to living stone by the revelation of the terrible truth. I am always inclined to conceive Lady Macbeth's night-walking as the summit, or topmost peak, of all tragic conception and execution—in Prose, too, the crowning of Poetry! But it must be, because these are the *ipsissima verba* —yea, the escaping sighs and moans of the bared soul. There must be nothing, not even the thin and translucent veil of the verse, betwixt her soul showing itself, and yours beholding. Words which your 'hearing latches' from the threefold abyss of Night, Sleep, and Conscience! What place for the enchantment of any music is here? Besides, she speaks in a whisper. The Siddons did—audible distinctly, throughout the stilled immense theatre. Here music is not—sound is not—only an anguished soul's faint breathings —gaspings. And observe that Lady Macbeth carries—a candle—besides washing her hands—and besides speaking prose—three departures from the

of trumpets calling, as clamorous harbingers, to blood and death, to its conclusion, when Macduff, with dripping sword, brings in the freshly hewn-off head of the "dead butcher," to lay it at the feet of the victorious Malcolm — exhibits a sequence of scenes in which deeds and thoughts of horror and violence are perpetually, and almost physically, forced upon the attention of the spectator. In short, the play is one clot of blood from beginning to end. It was objected to Alfieri (by Grimm, I believe), that he wrote his tragedies, not in tears, but blood. Shakespeare could write in tears when he pleased. In Macbeth he chose to dip his pen in a darker current.

No where in the course of the play does he seek to beguile us of our tears. We feel no more interest in the gracious Duncan, in Banquo, in Lady Macduff, than we do in the slaughtered grooms. We feel that they have been brutally murdered; and, if similar occurrences were to take place in Wapping or Rotherhithe, London would be in commotion. All the police from A to Z would be set on the alert, the newspapers crammed with paragraphs, and a hot search instigated after the murderer. If taken, he would be duly tried, wondered at, gazed after, convicted, hanged, and forgotten. We should think no more of his victim than we now think of Hannah Browne.* The other characters of the play, with the exception of the two principal, are nonentities. We care nothing for Malcolm or Donalbain,

severe and elect method, to bring out that supreme revelation. I have been told that the great Mrs. Pritchard used to touch the palm with the tips of her fingers, for the washing, keeping candle in hand: — that the Siddons first set down her candle, that she might come forward, and wash her hands in earnest, one over the other, as if she were at her wash-hand stand, with plenty of water in her basin — that when Sheridan got intelligence of her design so to do, he ran shrieking to her, and, with tears in his eyes, besought that she would not, at one stroke, overthrow Drury Lane — that she persisted, and turned the thousands of bosoms to marble."—M.

* Murdered by James Greenacre and Sarah Gale, early in 1837 — a crime which, from its revolting incidents and singular atrocity created much excitement in London, for several months.—M.

or Lenox or Rosse, or the rest of the Scottish nobles. Pathetic, indeed, are the words which burst from Macduff when he hears the astounding tidings that all his pretty chickens and their dam have been carried off at one fell swoop; but he soon shakes the woman out of his eyes, and dreams only of revenge. His companions are slightly affected by the bloody deed, and grief is in a moment converted into rage. It is but a short passage of sorrow, and the only one of the kind. What is equally remarkable is, that we have but one slight piece of comic in the play —the few sentences given to the porter;* and their humor turns upon a gloomy subject for jest—the occupation of the keeper of the gates of hell. With these two exceptions—the

* The speech of this porter is in blank verse:—

"Here is a knocking indeed! If a man
Were porter of hell-gate, he should have old
Turning the key. Knock—knock—knock! Who is there,
In the name of Beelzebub? Here is a farmer
That hanged himself [up]on the expectation
Of plenty: come in time. Have napkins enough
About you. Here you'll sweat for it. Knock—knock!
Who's there, in the other devil's name? [I'] faith
Here's an equivocator, that could swear
In both the scales 'gainst either scale; [one] who
Committed treason enough for God's sake, yet
Can not equivocate to heaven. Oh! come in,
Equivocator. Knock—knock—knock! Who's there?
'Faith, here's an English tailor come hither
For stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor.
Here you may roast your goose.
Knock—knock—
Never in quiet.
Who are you? but this place is too cold for hell.
I'll devil-porter it no longer. I had thought
T' have let in some of all professions,
That go the primrose-path to th' everlasting darkness."

The alterations I propose are very slight. *Upon* for *on*, *I'faith* for *faith*, and the introduction of the word *one* in a place where it is required. The succeeding dialogue is also in blank verse. So is the sleeping-scene of Lady Macbeth; and that so palpably, that I wonder it could ever pass for prose. —W. M.

brief pathos of Macduff, and the equally brief comedy of the porter — all the rest is blood. Tears and laughter have no place in this cavern of death.

Of such a gory poem, Macbeth is the centre, the moving spirit. From the beginning, before treason has entered his mind, he appears as a man delighting in blood. The captain, announcing his deeds against Macdonwald, introduces him bedabbled in slaughter :—

> "For brave Macbeth — well he deserves that name —
> Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
> Which smoked with bloody execution,
> Like valor's minion carved out his passage
> Until he faced the slave;
> And ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
> Till he unseamed him from the nave to the chops,*
> And fixed his head upon our battlements."

After this desperate backstroke, as Warburton justly calls it, Macbeth engages in another combat equally sanguinary. He and Banquo

> "Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe;
> Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
> Or memorize another Golgotha,
> I can not tell."

Hot from such scenes, he is met by the witches. They promise him the kingdom of Scotland. The glittering prize instantly affects his imagination. He is so wrapt in thought at the very moment of its announcement, that he can not speak. He soon informs us what is the hue of the visions passing through his mind. The witches had told him he was to be king: they had not said a word about the means. He instantly supplies them :

* Warburton proposes that we should read "from the *nape* to the chops," as a more probable wound. But this could hardly be called *unseaming:* and the wound is intentionally horrid, to suit the character of the play. So, for the same reason, when Duncan is murdered, we are made to remark that the old man had much blood in him. — W. M.

> "Why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature?"

The dreaded word itself soon comes:—

> "My thought, whose MURDER yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man, that function
> Is smothered in surmise."

To a mind so disposed, temptation is unnecessary. The thing was done. Duncan was marked out for murder before the letter was written to Lady Macbeth, and she only followed the thought of her husband.*

Love for him is in fact her guiding passion. She sees that he covets the throne—that his happiness is wrapped up in the hope of being a king—and her part is accordingly taken without hesitation. With the blindness of affection, she persuades herself that he is full of the milk of human kindness, and that he would reject false and unholy ways of attaining the object of his desire. She deems it, therefore, her duty to spirit him to the task. Fate and metaphysical aid, she argues, have destined him for the golden round of Scotland. Shall she not lend her assistance? She does not ask the question twice. She will. Her sex, her woman's breasts, her very nature, oppose the task she has prescribed to herself; but she prays to the ministers of murder—to the spirits that tend on mortal thoughts—to make thick her blood, and stop up the access and passage of remorse; and she succeeds in mustering the desperate courage which bears her through.† Her instigation was not, in

* Wilson draws attentions to the fact—though he calls Lady Macbeth "a bold, bad woman—not a Fiend"—that of all the murders Macbeth may have committed, she knew beforehand but of *one*—Duncan's.—M.

† Her obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness give her the ascendency over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her

reality, wanted. Not merely the murder of Duncan, but of Malcolm, was already resolved on by Macbeth :—

> "The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
> On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies. Stars! hide your fires,
> Let not light see my black and dark desires!"

As the time for the performance of the deed approaches, he is harassed by doubts; but he scarcely shows any traces of compunction or remorse. He pauses before the crime—not from any hesitation at its enormity, but for fear of its results—for fear of the poisoned chalice being returned to his own lips—for fear of the trumpet-tongued indignation which must attend the discovery of the murder of so popular a prince as Duncan—one who has borne his faculties so meekly, and loaded Macbeth

resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She is a great bad woman, whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Goneril. She is only wicked to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed, by weak and womanly regrets, than by the hardness of her heart or want of natural affections. The impression which her lofty determination of character makes on the mind of Macbeth is well described where he exclaims :—

> "Bring forth men children only;
> For thy undaunted mettle should compose
> Nothing but males!"

Nor do the pains she is at to "screw his courage to the sticking-place," the reproach to him, not to be "lost so poorly in himself," the assurance that "a little water clears them of this deed," show any thing but her greater consistency in wickedness. Her strong-nerved ambition furnishes ribs of steel to "the sides of his intent;" and she is herself wound up to the execution of her baneful project with the same unshrinking fortitude in crime, that in other circumstances she would probably have shown patience in suffering. Her fault seems to have been an excess of that strong principle of self-interest and family aggrandizement, not amenable to the common feelings of compassion and justice, which is so marked a feature in barbarous nations and times. A passing reflection of this kind, on the resemblance of the sleeping king to her father, alone prevents her from slaying Duncan with her own hand.—Hazlitt.

himself with honors. He is not haunted by any feeling for the sin, any compassion for his victim: the dread of losing the golden opinions he has so lately won, the consequences of failure, alone torment him. His wife has not to suggest murder, for that has been already resolved upon; but to represent the weakness of drawing back, after a resolution has once been formed. She well knows that the momentary qualm will pass off—that Duncan is to be slain, perhaps when time and place will not so well adhere. Now, she argues—now it can be done with safety. Macbeth is determined to wade through slaughter to a throne. If he passes this moment, he loses the eagerly-desired prize, and lives for ever after a coward in his own esteem; or he may make the attempt at a moment when detection is so near at hand, that the stroke which sends Duncan to his fate will be but the prelude of the destruction of my husband. She therefore rouses him to do at once that from which she knows nothing but fear of detection deters him; and, feeling that there are no conscientious scruples to overcome, applies herself to show that the present is the most favorable instant. It is for him she thinks—for him she is unsexed—for his ambition she works—for his safety she provides.*

* Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakespeare, is a class individualized:—of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day-dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt. Hers is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition; she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity of fancy which she can not support, but sinks in the season of remorse, and dies in suicidal agony. Her speech:—

"Come, all you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here," &c.

is that of one who had habitually familiarized her imagination to dreadful conceptions, and was trying to do still more. Her invocations and requisitions are all the false efforts of a mind accustomed only hitherto to the shadows of the imagination, vivid enough to throw the every-day substances of life into shadow, but never as yet brought into direct contact with their own correspondent realities. She evinces no womanly life, no wifely joy, at

Up to the very murder, Macbeth displays no pity — no feeling for any body but himself. Fear of detection still haunts him, and no other fear:—

> "Thou sure and steadfast earth,
> Hear not my steps which way they walk, for fear
> The very stones prate of my whereabout."

As Lady Macbeth says, it is the frustrated attempt, not the crime, that can confound him. When it has been accomplished, he is for a while visited by brain-sick fancies; and to her, who sees the necessity of prompt action, is left the care of providing the measures best calculated to avert the dreaded detection. She makes light of facing the dead, and assures her husband that —

> "A little water clears us of this deed.
> How easy it is then!"

Does she indeed feel this? Are these the real emotions of her mind? Does she think that a little water will wash out what has been done, and that it is as easy to make all trace of it vanish from the heart as from the hand? She shall answer us from her sleep, in the loneliness of midnight, in the secrecy of her chamber. Bold was her bearing, reckless and defying her tongue, when her husband was to be served or saved; but the sigh bursting from her heavily-charged breast, and her deep agony when she feels that, so far from its being easy to get rid of the witness of murder, no washing can obliterate the damnéd spot, no perfume sweeten the hand once redolent of blood, prove that the recklessness and defiance were only assumed. We find at last what she had sacrificed, how dreadful was the strug-

the return of her husband, no pleased terror at the thought of his past dangers; while Macbeth bursts forth naturally—

> "My dearest love—"

and shrinks from the boldness with which she presents her own thoughts to him.—COLERIDGE.

gle she had to subdue. Her nerve, her courage, mental and physical, was unbroken during the night of murder; but horror was already seated in her heart. Even then a touch of what was going on in her bosom breaks forth. When urging Macbeth to act, she speaks as if she held the strongest ties of human nature in contempt:—

> "I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
> I would, when it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dashed the brains out, had I but so sworn
> As you have done to this."

Is she indeed so unnatural — so destitute of maternal, of womanly feeling? No. In the next scene we find her deterred from actual participation in killing Duncan, because he resembled her father in his sleep. This is not the lady to pluck the nipple from the boneless gums of her infant, and dash out its brains. Her language is exaggerated in mere bravado, to taunt Macbeth's infirmity of purpose by a comparison with her own boasted firmness; but if the case had arisen, she who had recoiled from injuring one whose life stood in the way of her husband's hopes from a fancied resemblance to her father, would have seen in the smile of her child a talisman of resistless protection.*

* Mrs. Jameson says: "In the murdering scene, the obdurate inflexibility of purpose with which she drives on Macbeth to the execution of their project, and her masculine indifference to blood and death, would inspire unmitigated disgust and horror, but for the involuntary consciousness that it is produced rather by the exertion of a strong power over herself, than by absolute depravity of disposition and ferocity of temper. This impression of her character is brought home at once to our very hearts, with the most profound knowledge of the springs of nature within us, the most subtle mastery over their various operations, and a feeling of dramatic effect not less wonderful. The very passages in which Lady Macbeth displays the most savage and relentless determination, are so worded as to fill the mind with the idea of sex, and place the *woman* before us in all her dearest attributes, at once soft-

The murder done, and her husband on the throne, she is no longer implicated in guilt. She is unhappy in her elevation, and writhes under a troubled spirit in the midst of assumed gayety. She reflects with a settled melancholy that

> "Naught's had, all's spent,
> When our desire is got without content.
> 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
> Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy."

This to herself. To cheer her lord, she speaks a different language in the very next line:—

> "How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
> Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
> Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
> With those they think on?"

Her own thoughts, we have just seen, were full as sorry as those of her husband; but she can wear a mask. Twice only

ening and refining the horror, and rendering it more intense. Thus, when she reproaches her husband for his weakness:—

> "'From this time,
> Such I account thy love!'

"Again:—

> "'Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, your murdering ministers,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose,' etc.

> "'I have given suck, and know how tender 'tis
> To love the babe that milks me." etc.

"And lastly, in the moment of extremest horror, comes that unexpected touch of feeling, so startling, yet so wonderfully true to nature:—

> "'Had he not resembled my father as he slept,
> I had done it!'

"This 'one touch of nature' (Warburton observes) is very artful; for, as the Poet has drawn the lady and her husband, it would be thought the act should have been done by her. It is likewise highly just; for, though ambition had subdued in her all the sentiments of nature toward present objects, yet the likeness of one past, which she had always been accustomed to regard with reverence, made her unnatural passions for a moment give way to the sentiments of instinct and humanity."—M.

does she appear after her accession to the throne; once masked, once unmasked. Once seated at high festival, entertaining the nobles of her realm, full of grace and courtesy, performing her stately hospitalities with cheerful countenance, and devising with rare presence of mind excuses for the distracted conduct of her husband.* Once again, when all guard is removed, groaning in despair.

The few words she says to Macbeth after the guests have departed, almost driven out by herself, mark that her mind is completely subdued. She remonstrates with him at first for having broken up the feast; but she can not continue the tone of reproof when she finds that his thoughts are bent on gloomier objects. Blood is for ever on his tongue. She had ventured to tell him that the visions which startle him were but the painting of his brain, and that he was unmanned in folly. He takes no heed of what she says, and continues to speculate — at first in distraction, then in dread, and lastly in savage cruelty — upon blood. The apparition of Banquo almost deprives him of his senses. He marvels that such things could be, and complains that a cruel exception to the ordinary laws of nature is permitted in his case. Blood, he says —

> "—— has been shed ere now in the olden time,
> Ere human statute purged the gentle weal" —

and in more civilized times also; but, when death came, no further consequences followed. Now, not even twenty mortal murders (he remembered the number of deadly gashes reported by the assassin) will keep the victim in his grave. As long as Banquo's ghost remains before him, he speaks in the same distracted strain. When the object of his special wonder, by its

* Macbeth leans upon strength, trusts in her fidelity, and throws himself on her tenderness. She sustains him, calms him, soothes him.—Mrs. Jameson.

vanishing, gives him time to reflect, fear of detection, as usual, is his first feeling:—

"It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood!"

The most improbable witnesses have detected murder. Stones, trees, magotpies, choughs, have disclosed the secretest man of blood. Then come cruel resolves, to rid himself of his fears. Mercy or remorse is to be henceforward unknown; the firstlings of his heart are to be the firstlings of his hand—the bloody thought is to be followed instantly by the bloody deed. The tiger is now fully aroused in his soul:—

"I am in blood
Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

He sees an enemy in every castle; every where he plants his spies; from every hand he dreads an attempt upon his life. Nearly two centuries after the play was written, the world beheld one of its fairest portions delivered to a rule as bloody as that of the Scottish tyrant; and so true to nature are the conceptions of Shakespeare, that the speeches of mixed terror and cruelty, which he has given to Macbeth, might have been uttered by Robespierre. The atrocities of the Jacobin, after he had stept so far in blood, were dictated by fear. "Robespierre," says a quondam satellite,* "devenait plus sombre; son air renfrogné repoussait tout le monde; il ne parlait que d'assassinat, encore d'assassinat, toujours d'assassinat. Il avait peur que son sombre ne l'assassinat."

Lady Macbeth sees this grisly resolution, and ceases to remonstrate or interfere. Her soul is bowed down before his, and he communicates with her no longer. He tells her to be ignorant of what he plans, until she can applaud him for what he has done. When he abruptly asks her—

* Causes Secretes de la Révolution de 9 au 10 Thermidor: by Vilate, ex-Juré Révolutionnaire de Paris.

"How say'st thou — that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding ?"—

she, well knowing that she has not said any thing about it, and that the question is suggested by his own fear and suspicion, timidly inquires —

"Have you sent to him, *sir?*"

The last word is an emphatic proof that she is wholly subjugated. Too well is she aware of the cause, and the consequence, of Macbeth's *sending* after Macduff; but she ventures not to hint. She is no longer the stern-tongued lady urging on the work of death, and taunting her husband for his hesitation. She now addresses him in the humbled tone of an inferior; we now see fright and astonishment seated on her face. He tells her that she marvels at his words, and she would fain persuade herself that they are but the feverish effusions of an overwrought mind. Sadly she says —

"You lack the season of all nature — sleep."

Those are the last words we hear from her waking lips; and, with a hope that repose may banish those murky thoughts from her husband's mind, she takes, hand in hand with him, her tearful departure from the stage; and seeks her remorse-haunted chamber, there to indulge in useless reveries of deep-rooted sorrow, and to perish by her own hand amid the crashing ruin of her fortunes, and the fall of that throne which she had so fatally contributed to win.

He now consigns himself wholly to the guidance of the weird sisters; and she takes no part in the horrors which desolate Scotland, and rouse against him the insurrection of the enraged thanes. But she clings to him faithfully in his downfall. All others except the agents of his crimes, and his personal dependants, have abandoned him; but she, with mind diseased, and a heart weighed down by the perilous stuff of recollections that

defy the operation of oblivious antidote, follows him to the doomed castle of Dunsinane. It is evident that he returns her affection, by his anxious solicitude about her health, and his melancholy recital of her mental sufferings.* He shows it still more clearly by his despairing words when the tidings of her death are announced. Seyton delays to communicate it; but at last the truth must come—that the queen is dead. It is the overflowing drop in his cup of misfortune.

> "She should have died hereafter;
> There would have been a time for such a word."

I might have borne it at some other time; but now—now—now that I am deserted by all—penned in my last fortress—feeling that the safeguards in which I trusted are fallacious—now it is indeed the climax of my calamity, that she, who helped me to rise to what she thought was prosperity and honor—who clung to me through a career that inspired all else with horror and hate—and who, in sickness of body and agony of mind, follows me in the very desperation of my fate, should at such an hour be taken from me—I am now undone indeed! He then, for the first time, reflects on the brief and uncertain tenure of life.† He has long dabbled in death, but it never

* Some have entertained the opinion that Lady Macbeth did "with violent hand foredo her life," and her doctor, it may be noted, desires that all means of self-harm may be kept out of her way. Wilson says: "Yet the impression on us, as the thing proceeds, is that she dies of pure remorse—which I believe, she is *visibly dying*. The cry of women announcing her death, is rather as of those who stood around the bed watching, and, when the heart at the touch of the invisible finger stops, shriek—than of one after the other coming in and finding the self-slain—a confused, informal, perplexing, and perplexed proceeding—but the Cry of Women is formal, regular for the stated occasion. You may say, indeed, that she poisoned herself—and so died in bed—watched. Under the precautions, that is unlikely—too refined. The manner of Seyton, 'The Queen, my lord, is dead,' shows me that it was hourly expected. How these few words would *seek* into you, did you first read the Play in mature age! She died a natural death—of remorse."—M.

† His wife, the only being who could have any seat in his affections, dies;

before touched himself so closely. He is now aweary of the sun; now finds the deep curses which follow him sufficiently loud to pierce his ear; now discovers that he has already lived long enough; and plunges into the combat, determined, if he has lived the life of a tyrant, to die the death of a soldier, with harness on his back. Surrender or suicide does not enter his mind; with his habitual love of bloodshed, he feels a savage pleasure in dealing gashes all around; and at last, when he finds the charms, on which he depended, of no avail, flings himself, after a slight hesitation, into headlong conflict with the man by whose sword he knows he is destined to fall, with all the reckless fury of despair. What had he now to care for? The last tie that bound him to human kind was broken by the death of his wife, and it was time that his tale of sound and fury should come to its appropriate close.*

Thus fell he whom Malcolm in the last speech of the play calls "the dead butcher." By the same tongue Lady Macbeth is stigmatized as the fiend-like queen. Except her share in the murder of Duncan — which is, however, quite sufficient to justify the epithet in the mouth of his son — she does nothing in the play to deserve the title; and for her crime she has been sufficiently punished by a life of disaster and remorse. She is not the tempter of Macbeth.† It does not require much philos-

he puts on despondency, the final heart-armor of the wretched, and would think every thing shadowy and unsubstantial, as indeed all things are to those who can not regard them as symbols of goodness.—COLERIDGE.

* In Wright's *History of Scotland*, the real story of Macbeth is given in considerable detail, and it is declared that "instead of being hated by his subjects, the name of Macbeth was long popular in Scotland as that of one of the best of their kings, and the Scottish people felt the indignity of a foreign intervention in their domestic affairs."—In writing the play, Shakespeare drew his idea and some of the incidents from the fables of the chroniclers, as he found them.—M.

† Mr. Verplanck, noticing how the character of Lady Macbeth had been defended by Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Jameson, says that though there is some little excess of zeal in their advocacy, "yet their views are substantially cor-

ophy to pronounce that there were no such beings as the weird sisters; or that the voice that told the Thane of Glamis that he was to be King of Scotland, was that of his own ambition. In his own bosom was brewed the hell-broth, potent to call up visions counselling tyranny and blood; and its ingredients were his own evil passions and criminal hopes. Macbeth himself only believes as much of the prediction of the witches as he desires. The same prophets who foretold his elevation to the throne, foretold also that the progeny of Banquo would reign; and yet, after the completion of the prophecy so far as he is himself concerned, he endeavors to mar the other part by the murder of Fleance. The weird sisters are, to him, no more than the Evil Spirit which, in Faust, tortures Margaret at her prayers. They are but the personified suggestions of his mind. She, the wife of his bosom, knows the direction of his thoughts; and, bound to him in love, exerts every energy, and sacrifices every feeling, to minister to his hopes and aspirations. This is her sin, and no more.* He retains, in all his guilt and crime,

rect. Lady Macbeth is not a mere fiend, but a woman of high intellect, bold spirit, and lofty desires,—untainted by any grovelling vice, or grosser passion. She is not cruel or guilty from revenge or malignity. She is mastered by the fiery thirst for power, and that for her husband as well as herself. It is the single intensity of that passion that nerves her to 'direst cruelty.' She overpowers Macbeth's mind, and beats down his doubts and fears — not by superior talent, not by violence of will — by intensity of purpose. She does not even hear the whispers of conscience. They are drowned in the strong whirlwind of her own thoughts. She has intellectually the terrible beauty of the Medusa of classic art. Hers is a majestic spiritual wickedness, unalloyed by noble qualities of the mind, and the deep affections of a wife."—M.

* Alluding to the comparatively favorably opinion of Lady Macbeth, held by Mrs. Siddons whose criticism will be found at the conclusion of this article, and Mrs. Jameson in her Characteristics of Women, the following comments by Thomas Campbell will not be out of place here. He says:— "In a general view, I agree with both of the fair advocates of *Lady Macbeth*, that the language of preceding critics was rather unmeasured, when they described her as '*thoroughly hateful, invariably savage, and purely demoniac.*' It is true, that the ungentlemanly epithet, fiendlike, is applied to her by

a fond feeling for his wife. Even when meditating slaughter, and dreaming of blood, he addresses soft words of conjugal endearment; he calls her "dearest chuck," while devising assas-

Shakespeare himself, but then he puts it into the mouth of *King Malcolm*, who might naturally be incensed. *Lady Macbeth* is not thoroughly hateful, for she is not a virago, not an adultress, not impelled by revenge. On the contrary, she expresses no feeling of personal malignity toward any human being in the whole course of her part. Shakespeare could have easily displayed her crimes in a more common-place and accountable light, by assigning some feudal grudge as a mixed motive of her cruelty to *Duncan;* but he makes her a murderess in cold blood, and from the sole motive of ambition, well knowing, that if he had broken up the inhuman serenity of her remorselessness by the ruffling of anger, he would have vulgarized the features of the splendid Titaness. By this entire absence of petty vice and personal virulence, and by concentrating all the springs of her conduct into the one determined feeling of ambition, the mighty poet has given her character a statue-like simplicity, which, though cold, is spirit-stirring, from the wonder it excites, and which is imposing, although its respectability consists, as far as the heart is concerned, in merely negative decencies. How many villains walk the world in credit to their graves, from the mere fulfilment of those negative decencies. Had *Lady Macbeth* been able to smother her husband's babblings, she might have been one of them. Shakespeare makes her a great character, by calming down all the pettiness of vice, and by giving her only one ruling passion, which, though criminal, has at least a lofty object, corresponding with the firmness of her will and the force of her intellect. The object of her ambition was a crown, which, in the days in which we suppose her to have lived, was a miniature symbol of divinity. Under the full impression of her intellectual powers, and with a certain allowance which we make for the illusion of sorcery, the imagination suggests to us something like a half-apology for her ambition. Though I can vaguely imagine the supernatural agency of the spiritual world, yet I know so little precisely about fiends or demons, that I can not pretend to estimate the relation of their natures to that of Shakespeare's heroine. But, as a human being, *Lady Macbeth* is too intellectual to be thoroughly hateful. Moreover, I hold it no paradox to say, that the strong idea which Shakespeare conveys to us of her intelligence, is heightened by its contrast with that partial shade which is thrown over it by her sinful will giving way to superstitious influences. At times she is deceived, we should say, prosaically speaking, by the infatuation of her own wickedness, or, poetically speaking, by the agency of infernal tempters; otherwise she could not have imagined for a moment that she could palm upon the world the chamberlains of *Duncan* for his real murderers. Yet her mind, under the approach of this portentous and unnatural eclipse, in spite of its black illusions, has right enough remaining to show us a reading of *Macbeth's* character such as Lord Bacon could not have given

sinations, with the fore-knowledge of which he is unwilling to sully her mind. Selfish in ambition, selfish in fear, his character presents no point of attraction but this one merit. Shakespeare gives us no hint as to her personal charms, except when he makes her describe her hand as "little." We may be sure that there were few "more thorough-bred or fairer fingers," in the land of Scotland, than those of its queen, whose bearing in public toward Duncan, Banquo, and the nobles, is marked by elegance and majesty; and, in private, by affectionate anxiety for her sanguinary lord. He duly appreciated her feelings, but it is pity that such a woman should have been united to such a man. If she had been less strong of purpose, less worthy of confidence, he would not have disclosed to her his ambitious designs; less resolute and prompt of thought and action, she

to us more philosophically, or in fewer words. All this, however, only proves *Lady Macbeth* to be a character of brilliant understanding, lofty determination, and negative decency. That the poet meant us to conceive her more than a piece of august atrocity, or to leave a tacit understanding of her being naturally amiable, I make bold to doubt. Mrs. Siddons, disposed by her own nature to take the most softened views of her heroine, discovers, in her conduct toward *Macbeth*, a dutiful and unselfish tenderness, which, I own, is far from striking me. '*Lady Macbeth*,' she says, 'seeks out *Macbeth*, that she may, at least, participate in his wretchedness.' But is *that* her real motive? No; *Lady Macbeth*, in that scene, seems to me to have no other object than their common preservation. She finds that he is shunning society, and is giving himself up to '*his sorry fancies*.' Her trying to snatch him from these is a matter of policy; — a proof of her sagacity, and not of her social sensibility. At least, insensitive as we have seen her to the slightest joy at the return of her husband, it seems unnecessary to ascribe to her any newsprung tenderness, when self-interest sufficiently accounts for her conduct. Both of her fair advocates lay much stress on her abstaining from vituperation toward *Macbeth*, when she exhorts him to retire to rest after the banquet. But, here I must own, that I can see no proof of her positive tenderness. Repose was necessary to *Macbeth*'s recovery. Their joint fate was hanging by a hair; and she knew that a breath of her reproach, by inflaming him to madness, would break that hair, and plunge them both into exposure and ruin. Common sense is always respectable; and here it is joined with command of temper and matrimonial faith. But still her object includes her own preservation; and we have no proof of her alleged tenderness and sensibility."—M.

would not have been called on to share his guilt; less sensitive or more hardened, she would not have suffered it to prey for ever like a vulture upon her heart. She affords, as I consider it, only another instance of what women will be brought to, by a love which listens to no considerations, which disregards all else besides, when the interests, the wishes, the happiness, the honor, or even the passions, caprices, and failings of the beloved object, are concerned; and if the world, in a compassionate mood, will gently scan the softer errors of sister-woman, may we not claim a kindly construing for the motives which plunged into the Aceldama of this blood-washed tragedy the sorely-urged and broken-hearted Lady Macbeth?

*** The analytical and critical opinion of Mrs. Siddons (acknowledged to have been the best Lady Macbeth on the British stage) upon the whole tragedy of "Macbeth," and particularly on the character of its proper heroine, is so germane to the present series that it is here introduced:—

In this astonishing creature one sees a woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature; in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect, and all the charms and graces of personal beauty. You will probably not agree with me as to the character of that beauty; yet, perhaps, this difference of opinion will be entirely attributable to the difficulty of your imagination disengaging itself from that idea of the person of her representative which you have been so long accustomed to contemplate. According to my notion, it is of that character which I believe is generally allowed to be most captivating to the other sex — fair, feminine, nay, perhaps even fragile —

> "Fair as the forms that, wove in Fancy's loom,
> Float in light visions round the poet's head."

Such a combination only, respectable in energy and strength of mind,

and captivating in feminine loveliness, could have composed a charm of such potency as to fascinate the mind of a hero so dauntless, a character so amiable, so honorable as *Macbeth* — to seduce him to brave all the dangers of the present and all the terrors of a future world; and we are constrained, even while we abhor his crimes, to pity the infatuated victim of such a thraldom. His letters, which have informed her of the predictions of those preternatural beings who accosted him on the heath, have lighted up into daring and desperate determinations all those pernicious slumbering fires which the enemy of man is ever watchful to awaken in the bosoms of his unwary victims. To his direful suggestions she is so far from offering the least opposition, as not only to yield up her soul to them, but moreover to invoke the sightless ministers of remorseless cruelty to extinguish in her breast all those compunctious visitings of nature which otherwise might have been mercifully interposed to counteract, and perhaps eventually to overcome, their unholy instigations. But having impiously delivered herself up to the excitements of hell, the pitifulness of heaven itself is withdrawn from her, and she is abandoned to the guidance of the demons whom she has invoked.

Here I can not resist a little digression, to observe how sweetly contrasted with the conduct of this splendid fiend is that of the noble, single-minded *Banquo*. He, when under the same species of temptation, having been alarmed, as it appears, by some wicked suggestions of the *Weird Sisters* in his last night's dream, puts up an earnest prayer to heaven to have these cursed thoughts restrained in him, "*which nature gives way to in repose.*" Yes, even as to that time when he is not accountable either for their access or continuance, he remembers the precept, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

To return to the subject. *Lady Macbeth*, thus adorned with every fascination of mind and person, enters for the first time, reading a part of one of those portentous letters from her husband. "They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned with desire to question them further, they made themselves into thin air, into which they vanished. While I stood wrapped in the wonder of it,

came missives from the king, who all hailed me, 'Thane of Cawdor,' by which title, before these sisters had saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time with '*Hail, king that shall be!*' This I have thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell." Now vaulting ambition and intrepid daring rekindle in a moment all the splendors of her dark blue eyes. She fatally resolves that *Glamis and Cawdor* shall be also that which the mysterious agents of the Evil One have promised. She then proceeds to the investigation of her husband's character;

> "Yet I do fear thy nature,
> It is too full of the milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
> Art not without ambition, but without
> The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
> That thou wouldst holily. Wouldst not play false,
> And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'dst have great Glamis,
> That which cries, *Thus thou must do if thou have it!*
> And that which rather thou dost fear to do
> Than wishest should be undone."

In this development, we find that, though ambitious, he is yet amiable, conscientious, nay, pious; and yet of a temper so irresolute and fluctuating as to require all the efforts, all the excitement, which her uncontrollable spirit and her unbounded influence over him can perform. She continues —

> "Hie thee hither,
> That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
> And chastise with the valor of my tongue
> All that impedes thee from the golden round,
> Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
> To have thee crowned withal."

Shortly *Macbeth* appears. He announces the king's approach; and she, insensible it should seem to all the perils which he has encountered in battle, and to all the happiness of his safe return to her — for not one kind word of greeting or congratulation does she offer — is so entirely swallowed up by the horrible design, which has probably been suggested to her by his letters, as to have entirely forgotten both the one and the other. It is very remarkable that *Macbeth* is frequent

in expressions of tenderness to his wife, while she never betrays one symptom of affection toward him, till, in the fiery furnace of affliction, her iron heart is melted down to softness. For the present, she flies to welcome the venerable, gracious *Duncan*, with such a show of eagerness as if allegiance in her bosom sat crowned with devotion and gratitude.

The Second Act. — There can be no doubt that *Macbeth*, in the first instance, suggested his design of assassinating the king, and it is probable that he has invited his gracious sovereign to his castle, in order the more speedily and expeditiously to realize those thoughts, "*whose murder, though but yet fantastical, so shook his single state of man.*" Yet, on the arrival of the amiable monarch, who had so honored him of late, his naturally benevolent and good feelings resume their wonted power. He then solemnly communes with his heart, and after much powerful reasoning upon the danger of the undertaking, calling to mind that *Duncan* his king, of the mildest virtues, and his kinsman, lay as his guest. All those accumulated determents, with the violated rights of sacred hospitality bringing up the rear, rising all at once in terrible array to his awakened conscience, he relinquishes the atrocious purpose, and wisely determines to proceed no farther in the business. But, now, behold his evil genius, his grave charm, appears, and by the force of her revilings, her contemptuous taunts, and, above all, by her opprobrious aspersion of cowardice, chases the gathering drops of humanity from his eyes, and drives before her impetuous and destructive career all those kindly charities, those impressions of loyalty, and pity, and gratitude, which, but the moment before, had taken full possession of his mind. She says:—

> "I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from its boneless gums,
> And dashed the brains out — had I but so sworn
> As you have done to this."

Even here, horrific as she is, she shows herself made by ambition, but not by nature, a perfectly savage creature. The very use of such a tender allusion in the midst of her dreadful language, persuades one

unequivocally that she has really felt the maternal yearnings of a mother toward her babe, and that she considered this action the most enormous that ever required the strength of human nerves for its perpetration. Her language to *Macbeth* is the most potently eloquent that guilt could use. It is only in soliloquy that she invokes the powers of hell to unsex her. To her husband she avows, and the naturalness of her language makes us believe her, that she had felt the instinct of filial as well as maternal love. But she makes her very virtues the means of a taunt to her lord;—"You have the milk of human kindness in your heart," she says (in substance) to him, "but ambition, which is my ruling passion, would be also yours if you had courage. With a hankering desire to suppress, if you could, all your weaknesses of sympathy, you are too cowardly to will the deed, and can only dare to wish it. You speak of sympathies and feelings. I too have felt with a tenderness which your sex can not know; but I am resolute in my ambition to trample on all that obstructs my way to a crown. Look to me, and be ashamed of your weakness." Abashed, perhaps, to find his own courage humbled before this unimaginable instance of female fortitude, he at last screws up his courage to the sticking-place, and binds up each corporal agent to this terrible feat. It is the dead of night. The gracious *Duncan*, now shut up in measureless content, reposes sweetly, while the restless spirit of wickedness resolves that he shall wake no more. The daring fiend, whose pernicious potions have stupefied his attendants, and who even laid their daggers ready —her own spirit, as it seems, exalted by the power of wine—proceeds, "That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold," now enters the gallery, in eager expectation of the results of her diabolical diligence. In the tremendous suspense of these moments, while she recollects her habitual humanity, one trait of tender feeling is expressed, "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it." Her humanity vanishes, however, in the same instant; for when she observes that *Macbeth*, in the terror and confusion of his faculties, has brought the daggers from the place where they had agreed they should remain for the crimination of the grooms, she exhorts him to return with them to that place, and to smear those attendants of the sovereign

with blood. He, shuddering, exclaims, "I'll go no more! I am afear'd to think of what I have done! Look on't again I dare not!"

Then instantaneously the solitary particle of her humane feeling is swallowed up in her remorseless ambition, and wrenching the daggers from the feeble grasp of her husband, she finishes the act which the "infirm of purpose" had not courage to complete, and calmly and steadily returns to her accomplice with the fiend-like boast—

> "My hands are of your color;
> But I would scorn to wear a heart so white."

A knocking at the gate interrupts this terrific dialogue; and all that now occupies her mind is urging him to wash his hands and put on his nightgown, "*lest occasion call*," says she, "*and show us to be the watchers*." In a deplorable depravation of all rational knowledge, and lost to every recollection except that of his enormous guilt, she hurries him away to their own chamber.

The Third Act.—The golden round of royalty now crowns her brow, and royal robes enfold her form; but the peace that passeth all understanding is lost to her for ever, and the worm that never dies already gnaws her heart.

> "Naught's had—all's spent,
> Where our desire is had without content.
> 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
> Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy."

Under the impression of her present wretchedness, I, from this moment, have always assumed the dejection of countenance and manners which I thought accordant to such a state of mind; and, though the author of this sublime composition has not, it must be acknowledged, given any direction whatever to authorize this assumption, yet I venture to hope that he would not have disapproved of it. It is evident, indeed, by her conduct in the scene which succeeds the mournful soliloquy, that she is no longer the presumptuous, the determined creature that she was before the assassination of the king: for instance, on the approach of her husband, we behold for the first time striking indications of sensibility, nay, tenderness and sympathy; and I think this conduct is nobly followed up by her during the whole of their subse-

quent eventful intercourse. It is evident, I think, that the sad and new experience of affliction has subdued the insolence of her pride and the violence of her will; for she comes now to seek him out, that she may at least participate his misery. She knows, by her own woful experience, the torment which he undergoes, and endeavors to alleviate his sufferings by the following inefficient reasonings:—

> "How now, my lord — why do you keep alone?
> Of sorriest fancies your companions making?
> Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
> With them they think on. Things without all remedy
> Should be without regard. What's done, is done."

Far from her former habits of reproach and contemptuous taunting, you perceive that she now listens to his complaints with sympathizing feelings; and, so far from adding to the weight of his affliction the burden of her own, she endeavors to conceal it from him with the most delicate and unremitting attention. But it is in vain; as we may observe in this beautiful and mournful dialogue with the physician on the subject of his cureless malady: "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" &c. You now hear no more of her chidings and reproaches. No; all her thoughts are now directed to divert his from those sorriest fancies, by turning them to the approaching banquet, in exhorting him to conciliate the good will and good thoughts of his guests, by receiving them with a disengaged air, and cordial, bright, and jovial demeanor. Yes; smothering her sufferings in the deepest recesses of her own wretched bosom, we can not but perceive that she devotes herself entirely to the effort of supporting him.

Let it be here recollected, as some palliation of her former very different deportment, that she had probably from childhood commanded all around her with a high hand; had uninterruptedly, perhaps, in that splendid station, enjoyed all that wealth, all that nature had to bestow; that she had, possibly, no directors, no controllers, and that in womanhood her fascinated lord had never once opposed her inclinations. But now her new-born relentings, under the rod of chastisement, prompt her to make palpable efforts in order to support the spirits of her weaker, and, I must say, more selfish husband. Yes; in gratitude for his unbounded affection, and in commiseration of his sufferings, she

suppresses the anguish of her heart, even while that anguish is precipitating her into the grave which at this moment is yawning to receive her.

The Banquet.—Surrounded by their court, in all the apparent ease and self-complacency of which their wretched souls are destitute, they are now seated at the royal banquet; and although, through the greater part of this scene, *Lady Macbeth* affects to resume her wonted domination over her husband, yet, notwithstanding all this self-control, her mind must even then be agonized by the complicated pangs of terror and remorse. For what imagination can conceive her tremors, lest at every succeeding moment *Macbeth*, in his distraction, may confirm those suspicions, but ill concealed, under the loyal looks and cordial manners of their facile courtiers, when, with smothered terror, yet domineering indignation, she exclaims, upon his agitation at the ghost of *Banquo*, "Are you a man?" *Macbeth* answers:—

> "Ay, a bold one — that dare look on that
> Which might appal the devil.
> *L. Mac.* Oh, proper stuff!
> This is the very painting of your fear;
> This is the air-drawn dagger which, ye said,
> Led you to Duncan: — Oh, these flaws and starts,
> Impostors to true fear, would well become
> A woman's story at a winter's fire,
> Authorized by her grandam — Shame itself.
> Why do you make such faces? when all's done,
> You look but on a stool."

Dying with fear, yet assuming the utmost composure, she returns to her stately canopy; and, with trembling nerves, having tottered up the steps to her throne, that bad eminence, she entertains her wondering guests with frightful smiles, with over-acted attention, and with fitful graciousness; painfully, yet incessantly, laboring to divert their attention from her husband. While writhing thus under her internal agonies, her restless and terrifying glances toward *Macbeth*, in spite of all her efforts to suppress them, have thrown the whole table into amazement; and the murderer then suddenly breaks up the assembly by the following confession of his horrors:—

"Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me
Even to the disposition that I am,
When now I think you can behold such sights
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanched with fear.
Rosse. What sight, my lord?"

What imitation, in such circumstances as these, would ever satisfy the demands of expectation? The terror, the remorse, the hypocrisy of this astonishing being, flitting in frightful succession over her countenance, and actuating her agitated gestures with her varying emotions, present, perhaps, one of the greatest difficulties of the scenic art, and cause her representative no less to tremble for the suffrage of her private study than for its public effect.

It is now the time to inform you of an idea which I have conceived of *Lady Macbeth's* character, which perhaps will appear as fanciful as that which I have adopted respecting the style of her beauty; and, in order to justify this idea, I must carry you back to the scene immediately preceding the banquet, in which you will recollect the following dialogue:—

"Oh, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife;
Thou knowest that Banquo and his Fleance live.
L. Mac. But in them Nature's copy's not eterne.
Mac. There's comfort yet — they are assailable.
Then be thou jocund; ere the bat has flown
His cloistered flight — ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-born beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal — there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.
L. Mac. What's to be done?
Mac. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, unfeeling night,
Scarf up the tender, pitiful eye of day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
Makes way to the rooky wood.—
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their prey do rouse.

Thou marvellest at my words — but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill."

Now, it is not possible that she should hear all these ambiguous hints about *Banquo* without being too well aware that a sudden lamentable fate awaits him. Yet, so far from offering any opposition to *Macbeth's* murderous designs, she even hints, I think, at the facility, if not the expediency, of destroying both *Banquo* and his equally unoffending child, when she observes that, "*in them Nature's copy is not eterne.*" Having, therefore, now filled the measure of her crimes, I have imagined that the last appearance of *Banquo's* ghost became no less visible to her eyes than it became to those of her husband. Yes, the spirit of the noble *Banquo* has smilingly filled up, even to overflowing, and now commends to her own lips the ingredients of her poisoned chalice.

The Fifth Act.—Behold her now, with wasted form, with wan and haggard countenance, her starry eyes glazed with the ever-burning fever of remorse, and on their lids the shadows of death. Her ever-restless spirit wanders in troubled dreams about her dismal apartment; and, whether waking or asleep, the smell of innocent blood incessantly haunts her imagination:—

"Here's the smell of the blood still.
All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten
This little hand."

How beautifully contrasted is the exclamation with the bolder image of *Macbeth*, in expressing the same feeling:—

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash the blood
Clean from this hand?"

And how appropriately either sex illustrates the same idea!

During this appalling scene, which, to my sense, is the most so of them all, the wretched creature, in imagination, acts over again the accumulated horrors of her whole conduct. These dreadful images, accompanied with the agitations they have induced, have obviously accelerated her untimely end; for in a few moments the tidings of her death are brought to her unhappy husband. It is conjectured that she died by her own hand. Too certain it is, that she dies, and makes no

sign. I have now to account to you for the weakness which I have, a few lines back, ascribed to *Macbeth*; and I am not quite without hope that the following observations will bear me out in my opinion. Please to observe, that he (I must think pusillanimously, when I compare his conduct to her forbearance) has been continually pouring out his miseries to his wife. His heart has therefore been eased, from time to time, by unloading its weight of wo; while she, on the contrary, has perseveringly endured in silence the uttermost anguish of a wounded spirit.

> "The grief that does not speak,
> Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break."

Her feminine nature, her delicate structure, it is too evident, are soon overwhelmed by the enormous pressure of her crimes. Yet it will be granted, that she gives proofs of a naturally higher-toned mind than that of *Macbeth*. The different physical powers of the two sexes are finely delineated, in the different effects which their mutual crimes produce. Her frailer frame, and keener feelings, have now sunk under the struggle — his robust and less sensitive constitution has not only resisted it, but bears him on to deeper wickedness, and to experience the fatal fecundity of crime.

> "For mine own good — all causes shall give way.
> I am in blood so far stepped in, that should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

Henceforth, accordingly, he perpetrates horrors to the day of his doom. In one point of view, at least, this guilty pair extort from us, in spite of ourselves, a certain respect and approbation. Their grandeur of character sustains them both above recrimination (the despicable accustomed resort of vulgar minds) in adversity; for the wretched husband, though almost impelled into this gulf of destruction by the instigations of his wife, feels no abatement of his love for her, while she, on her part, appears to have known no tenderness for him, till, with a heart bleeding at every pore, she beholds in him the miserable victim of their mutual ambition. Unlike the first frail pair in Paradise, they spent not the fruitless hours in mutual accusation.

Mrs. Siddons had played *Lady Macbeth* in the provincial theatres many years before she attempted the character in London. Adverting to the first time this part was allotted to her, she says, in her Memoranda :—

It was my custom to study my characters at night, when all the domestic cares and business of the day were over. On the night preceding that in which I was to appear in this part for the first time, I shut myself up, as usual, when all the family were retired, and commenced my study of *Lady Macbeth*. As the character is very short, I thought I should soon accomplish it. Being then only twenty years of age, I believed, as many others do believe, that little more was necessary than to get the words into my head; for the necessity of discrimination, and the development of character, at that time of my life, had scarcely entered into my imagination. But to proceed. I went on with tolerable composure, in the silence of the night (a night I never can forget), till I came to the assassination scene, when the horrors of the scene rose to a degree that made it impossible for me to get farther. I snatched up my candle, and hurried out of the room, in a paroxysm of terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I ascended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panic-struck fancy like the movement of a spectre pursuing me. At last I reached my chamber, where I found my husband fast asleep. I clapped my candlestick down upon the table, without the power of putting the candle out; and I threw myself on my bed, without daring to stay even to take off my clothes. At peep of day I rose to resume my task; but so little did I know of my part when I appeared in it at night, that my shame and confusion cured me of procrastinating my business for the remainder of my life.

About six years afterward I was called upon to act the same character in London.* By this time I had perceived the difficulty of

* In the year 1785. Hazlitt says: "In speaking of the character of Lady Macbeth, we ought not to pass over Mrs. Siddons' manner of acting that part. We can conceive of nothing grander. It was something above nature. It seemed almost as if a being of superior order had dropped from a higher sphere to awe the world with the majesty of her appearance. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine; she was tragedy personified. In coming on in the sleeping-scene, her eyes

assuming a personage with whom no one feeling of common general nature was congenial or assistant. One's own heart could prompt one to express, with some degree of truth, the sentiments of a mother, a daughter, a wife, a lover, a sister, &c., but to adopt this character must be an effort of the judgment alone.

Therefore it was with the utmost diffidence, nay, terror, that I undertook it, and with the additional fear of Mrs. Pritchard's reputation in it before my eyes. The dreaded first night at length arrived, when, just as I had finished my toilet, and was pondering with fearfulness my first appearance in the grand fiendish part, comes Mr. Sheridan, knocking at my door, and insisting, in spite of all my entreaties not to be interrupted at this to me tremendous moment, to be admitted. He would not be denied admittance; for he protested he must speak to me on a circumstance which so deeply concerned my own interest, that it was of the most serious nature. Well, after much squabbling, I was compelled to admit him, that I might dismiss him the sooner, and compose myself before the play began. But, what was my distress and astonishment, when I found that he wanted me, even at this moment of anxiety and terror, to adopt another mode of acting the sleeping scene. He told me he had heard, with the greatest surprise and concern, that I meant to act it without holding the candle in my hand; and, when I urged the impracticability of washing out that "*damned spot*," with the vehemence that was certainly implied by both her own words and by those of her gentlewoman, he insisted, that if I did put the candle out of my hand, it would be thought a presumptuous innovation, as Mrs. Pritchard had always retained it in hers. My mind, however, was made up, and it was then too late to make me alter it; for I was too agitated to adopt another method. My deference for Mr. Sheridan's taste and judgment was, however, so great, that, had he proposed the alteration while it was possible for me to change my own plan, I should have yielded to his suggestion;

were open, but their sense was shut. She was like a person bewildered and unconscious of what she did. Her lips moved involuntarily — all her gestures were involuntarily and mechanical. She glided on and off the stage like an apparition. To have seen her in that character was an event in every one's life, not to be forgotten."—M.

though, even then, it would have been against my own opinion, and my observation of the accuracy with which somnambulists perform all the acts of waking persons. The scene, of course, was acted as I had myself conceived it; and the innovation, as Mr. Sheridan called it, was received with approbation. Mr. Sheridan himself came to me, after the play, and most ingenuously congratulated me on my obstinacy. When he was gone out of the room, I began to undress; and, while standing up before my glass, and taking off my mantle, a diverting circumstance occurred to chase amay the feelings of this anxious night; for, while I was repeating, and endeavoring to call to mind the appropriate tone and action to the following words, "Here's the smell of blood still!" my dresser innocently exclaimed, "Dear me, ma'am, how very hysterical you are to-night; I protest and vow, ma'am, it was not blood, but rose-pink and water, for I saw the property-man mix it up with my own eyes."

SHAKESPEARE PAPERS.

PART II.

THE LEARNING OF SHAKESPEARE.

ON THE LEARNING OF SHAKESPEARE.

[In Fraser's Magazine, for September, 1839, was commenced the publication of Dr. Maginn's Papers on Dr. Farmer's "Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare." The writer of this Essay — in which it was contended, at great length and much display, that Shakespeare's knowledge of ancient history and mythology was exclusively drawn from translations — was the Rev. Richard Farmer, D. D., who was born in 1735, was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and died in 1797. He eventually became Vice-Chancellor and Librarian of his *Alma Mater*, with high preferment in the Church, the most distinguished of which was a Canonry of St. Paul's. His attempt to reduce Shakespeare's scholarship even below the "small Latin and less Greek," which Ben Jonson had slightingly declared to be the extent of Shakespeare's classical learning, was very popular when first published, and has ever since been a text-book to those who contend that the Swan of Avon, deriving nothing from education of a higher order, must rest his claims to immortality solely upon his "native woodnotes wild."

Many ardent admirers of Shakespeare have not unwillingly adopted this view of the question — partly from a carelessness in examining the subject by and for themselves, and partly because, the more untutored the great Poet appeared, the more

honor might seem to be due to his natural powers, to his almost intuitive power of writing better than all his contemporaries, and to that "imagination all compact" which he possessed in a super-eminent degree. The less he knew from books, is the argument of such, the greater credit due to the greatness of his all-creating, all-adapting, and omniscient mind. It should be borne in mind, however, that, in the age of Shakespeare (as Warton states), allusions, quotations, and illustrations from ancient authors, ran through the whole conversation and amusements of society, as may be seen in the dramas of Lily, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, Jonson and others; and the daughters of the nobility, and all who pretended to a good education, were carefully instructed in Greek and Latin. Without doubt, Shakespeare was educated at the Grammar School of his native Stratford — one of the seminaries expressly established for instructing youth in the knowledge of Greek and Latin. Aubrey, who was a curious collector of memorabilia respecting eminent men, declares that Shakespeare not only knew Latin well, but, after he left school and before he went to London, had himself actually been a schoolmaster. The generality of critics hold, from the vast and varied information displayed all through his writings, that Shakespeare must have been highly educated. Only a few — among whom I am surprised to find Mr. Verplanck — hold the opposite opinion, and consider that his classical knowledge must have been small. That his knowledge was multitudinous can not be questioned. The doubt is, from what source did he fill his mind?

It is complimenting Shakespeare's intellect, at the expense of his culture, to consider him as a rude, untaught poet of nature, who wrote wonderfully, notwithstanding his want of a good education. As already remarked, the impression unfavorable to Shakespeare's scholarship has been principally derived from Ben Jonson's deprecatory observation. It should be remem-

bered—what his plays too painfully render evident—that Jonson was himself a very superior scholar. In truth, he thought that a knowledge of the classics was all-in-all, and he had so much of this knowledge that it rendered him pedantic in his writings, and haughtily intolerant in his estimate of the mental acquisitions and improvements of other men. Between his great erudition and common ignorance (says Dr. Ulrici) "there might be numerous intermediate and very respectable degrees of scholarship. Ben Jonson, from his elevated position, might have reason on his side, when he asserted that Shakespeare had 'little Latin and less Greek;' and at the same time there might be no inconsistency in the statement of Aubrey, who, like Rowe, was a collector of anecdotes, traits, and stories relating to Shakespeare, that he understood Latin very well. The former judged by an extreme philological standard; the latter took the general measure of educated men." It may be added (and Dr. Drake has accumulated an abundance of proofs, out of his works, on these points) that Shakespeare was well versed in all the popular French, Italian, and Spanish literature of his day, and was as intimate with the chronicles and histories of classical antiquity as with those of England. Law, medicine, divinity, the fine arts, geography, botany, and even the trades and occupations of the humbler classes were evidently familiar to him, also, and the truthfulness of his graphic descriptions of and allusions to different localities, at home and in foreign countries, warrants the belief that he had travelled largely and observingly. He knew all that was required to make him "the foremost man of all his time," or rather, to use the happy expression of Thomas Campbell, "the Poet of all the world."

The articles on the Learning of Shakespeare which these observations are intended to introduce, were originally prefaced by the following letter to the editor of *Fraser's Magazine*:—

Dear Sir:—As there appears to be a revived zeal for commentatorship on Shakespeare, I may be perhaps allowed to roll my tub among the rest; and the first service I wish to perform is to rid, or at least to give some reasons for ridding, all future editors of a superfluous swelling in the shape of Dr. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, which has long been a regular encumbrance on the *variorum* editions. In the subjoined letter, if you will be so good as to print it, your readers, who I hope are in number equal to the whole reading public of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Colonies,

—"From sunny Indus to the Pole,"—

will find my reasons for not thinking highly of the Master of Emmanuel, or his Shakespearian labors. The critical clique to which he belonged was peculiarly absurd; and we have only to cast a glance upon his face, as preserved in an engraving by Harding, to see that the feeble smirk of fat-headed and scornful blockheadism, self-satisfied, with that peddling pedantry of the smallest order, which entitled its possessor to look down with patronizing pity on the loftiest genius, is its prevailing feature. Perhaps somebody may think it worth while to contradict this assertion by a host of collegiate opinions in his favor, backed by a list of superlative panegyrics on his learning, and excellence of wisdom and wit, culled from various quarters; and I shall not dispute their justice, nor undervalue their merit. I am only dealing with the *Essay* before me; and with his picture, as I find it in the splendid Cracherode copy of Steevens (a presentation one) in the Britism Museum. Permit me to subscribe myself, with great respect,

Dear Mr. Yorke, faithfully yours,

William Maginn.

The editor of *Fraser* appended a note to intimate the pleasure with which he printed the paper, but added a disclaimer of being "answerable for any of its statements or arguments." The fact that Dr. Maginn published these papers, avowing the authorship, in a periodical in which he had previously contributed almost exclusively as an anonymous writer, may be taken to indicate his own good opinion of what he had written. He gave the sanction of his name only to the Shakespeare characters (forming the previous part of this volume) and to the Homeric Ballads, which will be included in the present edition of his Miscellaneous Works.—M.]

The Learning of Shakespeare.

Part I.—"Less Greek."

I have always considered Dr. Farmer's "celebrated Essay," as Steevens calls it, on the learning of Shakespeare, as a piece of pedantic impertinence, not paralleled in literature. The very style and manner in which this third or fourth rate scholar, undistinguished by any work of reputation whatever, speaks of "the old bard," as he usually entitles Shakespeare, are as disgusting as the smirking complacency with which he regards his own petty labors. "The rage of parallelisms," he says in his preface, "is almost over; and, in truth, nothing can be more absurd. This was stolen from *one* classic, that from *another;* and, had I not stepped in to his rescue, poor Shakespeare had been stripped as naked of ornament as when he first *held horses* at the door of the playhouse." His having ever held horses at the door of the playhouse is an idle fiction, which the slightest consideration bestowed on the career of his fortunes in London would suffice to dispel; but it is introduced here to serve the purpose of suggesting to Farmer's readers that the original condition of Shakespeare was menial, and therefore that it is improbable he had received an education fitting him to acquire a knowledge of ancient or foreign learning.

"Had *I* not come to his rescue," says Dr. Farmer, "poor

Shakespeare would have been stripped bare," &c. Passing the insolence and self-conceit of this assertion, may we not ask from whom was Shakespeare to be rescued? From some zealous commentators, it appears, who indulged in a rage for collecting parallelisms, *i. e.* passages in the classical authors, in which they thought they found resemblances to passages in Shakespeare. In this task they sometimes were fanciful, and saw likenesses where none existed, but not one of them accused Shakespeare of theft. There is a vast difference between a thief and an imitator. Who has ever accused Milton or Virgil of *stealing* from Homer? Who is so insane as to think that *Paradise Lost* or the *Æneïd* stands in need of "a rescue" from the annotators who point out the passages of the *Iliad*, or other poems, from which many of the most beautiful and majestic ornaments of the more modern great epics are derived? Nobody, of the most common sense, can imagine that illustrations of this kind strip the poets naked, or call for the assistance of such rescuers as Farmer.

Elsewhere he says:—

"These critics" (those who maintain Shakespeare's claims on learning), "and many others, their coadjutors, have supposed themselves able to trace Shakespeare in the writings of the ancients, and have sometimes persuaded us of their own learning, whatever became of their author's. Plagiarisms have been discovered in every natural description, and every moral sentiment. Indeed, by the kind assistance of the various *Excerpta*, *Sententiæ*, and *Flores*, this business may be effected with very little expense of time or sagacity; as Addison has demonstrated in his comment on *Chevy Chase*, and Wagstaff on *Tom Thumb;* and I myself will engage to give you quotations from the elder English writers (for, to own the truth, I was once idle enough to collect such), which shall carry with them at least an equal degree of similarity. But there can be no occasion of wasting any future time in this department; the world is now in possession of *marks of imitation*."

No doubt the world does possess the work, and equally is it doubtless that the world has totally forgotten the boon. A more worthless piece of trumpery criticism, empty parade, and shallow reading, does not exist than this extolled composition

of Bp. Hurd, therefore it is justly entitled to the laboriously fine compliment here paid it by Farmer.*

* There is one piece of literary imitation or plagiarism, which Hurd would not have remarked, if he had known of its existence. As it is somewhat curious, and as relevant to Shakespeare as at least nine tenths of the commentaries upon him, I extract a notice of it from a literary paper now extinct. [*Fraser's Literary Chronicle,* p. 265.]

"Steevens remarked, that nothing short of an act of parliament could compel any one to read the sonnets of Shakespeare; a declaration highly to the credit of his taste, and quite decisive as to his capability of properly editing the plays. It is certain, however, that the sonnets are not very generally read, and the same fate has befallen the prose works of Milton. Of this I can not produce a more extraordinary proof than what I find in D'Israeli's *Quarrels of Authors.* He has been speaking of the celebrated controversy between Warburton and Lowth, and subjoins this note:—

"'The correct and elegant taste of Lowth, with great humor, detected the wretched taste in which Warburton's prose style was composed; he did nothing more than print the last sentence of the *Inquiry on Prodigies* in measured lines, without, however, changing the place of a single word, and this produced some of the most turgid blank verse; Lowth describes it as the *musa pedestris* got on horseback in high prancing style. I shall give a few lines only of the final sentence in this essay:—

> "'Methinks I see her, like the mighty eagle
> Renewing her immortal youth, and purging
> Her opening sight at the unobstructed beams
> Of our benign meridian sun,' &c.

All this will, as many other lines, stand word for word in the original prose of our tasteless writer; but to show his utter want of even one imagination, his translations *in imitation of Milton's style,* are precisely like this ridiculous prose.'

"'We thought that the most famous passage in Milton's most famous English prose work, the *Areopagitica,* must have been known to all readers of our language: 'Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance,' &c., &c.; and yet here we find Warburton pillaging without any acknowledgment, as if he were safe in its obscurity; and the 'correct and elegant' Lowth treating it as wretched, turgid, and inharmonious bombast. Lowth, too, be it remarked, was a grammarian of our language by profession! And to wind up all, here we have Warburton's plagiarism passed unknown, and Lowth's critique adopted with due panegyric, by a painstaking and generally correct ex-

It would, indeed, be wandering far away from the question which I intend to discuss, if I were to enter upon the distinction between imitation and plagiarism, or attempt to define the line at which one begins and the other ends; but it is not going out of the way to pronounce the sentences just quoted very absurd. *Excerpta, Sententiæ, Flores,* will give but little assistance in tracing out imitations; for these compilations are in general nothing more than collections of *common-places,* which suggest themselves to reflective or poetic minds in all ages and countries pretty much in the same manner. We must adopt a very different course of reading if we wish to show, from the *peculiarities* of thought or expression which are to be found in one poet, whether he has or has not suggested the phrase or the idea to a successor. When this is judiciously done, it reflects honor on the taste and the reading of the critic. If the execution of such task be ridiculous, as sometimes it will be, the ridicule surely ought to attach to the commentator, not to the author. Shakespeare is not to be esteemed unlearned, because Upton has sometimes been preposterous; and yet that is the argument which runs throughout *this* "celebrated Essay."

Addison's critique on *Chevy Chase,* whether intended as jest or earnest, is in neither department very successful. The ballad poetry of England was, in his time, matter of mock to "the town," the sparkish Templar, the wits of the coffeehouses, and the men of *mode;* and those who, like Thomas Hearne, applied themselves to the antiquities of English literature, were especial butts of scorn. Addison, deeply imbued with this spirit, determined to be patronising at the expense of the old ballad; but not being altogether delivered over to the demon of *goût,* he could not refrain from expressing, now and then,

plorer of our antiquities and our literary history — whose studies have, moreover, led him to the most careful perusal of the literature and politics of the days of Charles I., to which he has devoted so much historical attention.'"—W. M.

genuine admiration of the picturesque touches in *Chevy Chase*, for some of which he found resemblances in the battle-poems of antiquity. Those resemblances are, in fact, unavoidable; for the poetic incidents of war, either in action or passion, are so few and so prominently striking, that they must occur to every poet, particularly to those who live among the scenes of which they sing; but, on the whole, so little was Addison qualified to perform the task of judging of the merits of the subject he selected for his criticism, that he took as his text, not the real *Chery Chase* of Richard Sheale, in the time of Henry VI.—that which stirred the heart of Sir Philip Sidney as with a trumpet—but a modern *rifaccimento*, made, in all probability, not fifty years before Addison was born, in every respect miserably inferior to the original, and in which are to be found these passages and expressions which excite the merriment of the jocular. He could not have bestowed much attention on our ballad lore, and, consequently, not critically known any thing of its spirit; for if he had, he might have found as well as Hearne, that the true ballad was "The Persé owt of Northumberlande."

As for Wagstaff's *Tom Thumb*, that is an avowed joke of Addison's critique on *Chevy Chase*, and in many parts amusingly executed, to the discomfiture of the *Spectator*. It is full of the then fashionable fooleries about Bentley; and the author, being a medical man, could not avoid having a fling at brother-doctors: it is now hardly remembered.* If, instead of quizzing Addison

* *Ex. gr.*—"The following Part of this Canto (the old ballad of *Tom Thumb*) is the Relation of our Hero's being put into a Pudding, and conveyed away in a Tinker's Budget; which is designed by our Author to prove, if it is understood literally, That the greatest Men are subjects of Misfortunes. But it is thought by Dr. B——tly to be all Mythology, and to contain the Doctrine of the Transmutation of Metals, and is designed to shew that all Matter is the same, though differently Modified. He tells me he intends to publish a distinct Treatise on this Canto; and I don't question, but he'll manage the Dispute with the same Learning, Conduct, and good Manners,

for his critique on *Chevy Chase*, and selecting the old ballad of *Tom Thumb* as his theme, the facetious physician could have made the *Tom Thumb* of Fielding, familiarized to us in Kane O'Hara's version, the object of his comment, then, as that renowned drama was originally written as a parody on the favorite tragedies of the day, it would be easy seriously to trace the remote original of the parodist in the direct original of the burlesqued tragedian. If we could prove, for instance, that Thomson was indebted to any prior dramatist for

"O Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!"

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he has done others, and as Dr. Salmon uses in his corrections of Dr. Sydenham and the Dispensatory. The next Canto is the story of Tom Thumb's being swallowed by a Cow, and his Deliverance out of her, which is treated of at large by *Giordano Bruno*, in his *Spaccio de la Bestia trionfante;* which book, though very scarce, yet a *certain Gentleman*, who has it in his possession, has been so obliging as to let every Body know where to meet with it. After this you find him carried off by a Raven, and swallowed by a Giant; and 'tis almost the same story as that of Ganimede and the Eagle, in Ovid:—

"'*Now by a Raven of Strength,*
Away poor Tom was borne.

"'*Nec mora: percusso mendacibus ære pennis*
Abripit Ilivden.'"

A Comment upon the History of Tom Thumb. London, 1711; p. 13.

There are some pretty fair jokes in pp. 11–15, 18, &c. Wagstaffe did not know how near the truth his jest lay, when he attributes the origin of the fable to antiquity as remote as that of the Druids (p. 5). The conclusion of his pamphlet is amusing *now*. "If," continues my bookseller, "you have a mind that it should turn to advantage with treason or heresy, get censured by the parliament or convocation, and condemned to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman, and you can't fail having a multitude of readers, by the same reason *a notorious rogue has such a number of followers to the gallows*," p. 24. It is now hard to say what is, or is not, treason. Heresy is not worth sixpence in the book-market. There is no Convocation practically existing; the literary hangman, like the schoolmaster, has gone abroad; and as for the censure of Parliament, since that assembly has been reformed, it would not influence the sale of a copy more or less of a twopenny tract, or a five-pound folio.—W. M.

that writer might claim the corresponding exclamation in *Tom Thumb*:—

"O Huncamunca! Huncamunca, O!"

as his original property; and the similarity of imitation insinuated by Farmer might be understood.

But these are not cases in point: nor would Farmer's own collection of passages, in which the writers of antiquity might be supposed to supply resemblances to what we find in English writers, affect the question in the least degree; for if by these writers he means Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Surrey, Wyatt, Skelton, &c., they were all men of extensive reading in various languages, and had ample knowledge of preceding authors, and sufficient access for the purpose of borrowing, or imitating, or stealing, if they pleased. In making his collection, though Farmer designates in idleness, he might have been profitably employed; for he was a man of extensive and desultory reading, with the advantage of having a great library at his service, being the principal librarian of the University of Cambridge; —he was idly employed, indeed, when he took upon himself the office of "rescuing" Shakespeare.

There is, however, in his *Essay* an amusing proof that he was practically acquainted with the art of plagiarism. Shakespeare, he informs us, came out of the hand of Nature, "*as some one else* expresses it, like Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth, and mature." Well did he know who this *some one else* was, for he quotes elsewhere "the preface to his" (that *some one else's*) "elegant translation of Terence." This is to be applauded; for it is of the best and most approved tricks of the plagiary trade to pilfer with an appearance of candor, which gives the contrabandist all the credit of the appropriated passage with those who know not whence it comes, leaving him at the same time a loophole of retreat when detected, by pointing out how he had disclaimed its originality. But the *some one else*, who

happened to be George Colman the elder, was not the kind of person to submit in silence; and, accordingly, in the next edition of his Terence, he claims his "thunder" as zealously as Dennis himself. "It is whimsical enough," he observes, "that this *some one else*, whose expression is here quoted to countenance the general notion of Shakespeare's want of literature, should be no other than myself. Mr. Farmer does not choose to mention where he met with the expression of *some one else;* and *some one else* does not choose to mention where he dropped it." This is very lofty on the part of Colman. I do not know that any one has taken the trouble of seeking where he dropped it, but an anonymous critic [*Ed. Variorum*, Shakespeare of 1813, p. 91, vol. ii.] has shown us where he found it; namely, in Dr. Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition.* "An adult genius comes out of Nature's hands, as Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth, and mature. Shakespeare's genius was of this kind." It is excessively diverting to find Farmer pilfering from Colman, and Colman claiming the stolen property only to be convicted that he had himself stolen it from Young. I have noticed this trifle principally to illustrate the difference between literary imitation and literary thieving. To any one acquainted with classical mythology, the idea of comparing original genius starting into the world at once in full vigor of strength and beauty, without the tedious process of infant care and culture, to the Goddess of Wisdom bursting full armed from the brain of Jupiter, might readily occur. Two people, or two hundred and fifty-two people, might think of the same thing; and yet he who came second, or two hundred and fifty-second, be as original as the man who came first. This would be a case of *coincidence.* If a verse-maker had seen the sentence of Young, and turned it into metre as thus—

> "As from the forehead of the Olympian king
> Sprang Pallas armed, so full grown and mature

Adult from Nature's hand does Genius spring,
No tedious hours of nurture to endure,"

it would be a case of *imitation*. The verse-maker has contributed some thing in the shape of labor, at least, to the composition as he exhibits it; if not "the vision and the faculty divine," yet "the single, double, and the triple rhymes;" but if we find not merely the obvious idea, but the peculiar phraseology, as "coming out of Nature's hand;" as "Pallas [*not Minerva*] out of Jove's [*not Jupiter's*] head;" as "at full growth and mature;" and these phrases applied not to genius in general, but to the particular genius which was originally designated; without any alteration of form, or any acknowledgment of the author in whom the borrower found it; then it is a direct case of literary theft: or, if it be more polite so to style it, a case of plagiarism.

Enough of this. The principle of Farmer's *Essay* is, that because injudicious commentators thought they found in the classics what Shakespeare had not found there, the "old bard" never could have consulted the classics at all. By such a process, the same case could be proved against Milton himself. P. Hume discovers, for example, that *amerced* in the line,—

"Millions of spirits for his fault *amerced*
Of heaven,"—(*Par. Lost*, i. 600.)

has "a strange affinity with the Greek ἀμερδω, to *deprive*, to *take away*," as Homer has used it, much to our purpose, *Odyss.* viii. 64:—

"'Οφθαλμων μὲν 'ΑΜΕΡΣΕ, δίδυν δ' ἡδείαν ἀοιδην"

"The muse *amerced* him of his eyes, but gave him the faculty of singing sweetly;" *amerced* being, in fact, a technical word of our law, derived to us from the Norman-French *amercier*. Newton is of opinion that, in *Comus*, Milton, by his use of the word *gazed*, in the line,

"This nymph that *gazed* upon his clustering locks,"—(*Comus*, v. 54.)

deduced it from ἄγαζομαι —gaze being a Saxon word of old Teutonic root, Ge-sean (*contentis oculis aspicere*, says Skinner). It would be easy to give other examples, but let these suffice. Some future Farmer may adduce, as a proof of the ignorance or folly of those who were preposterously determined to prove that Milton had read Homer, that they found it necessary to press words derived from our Saxon or Norman ancestors into their service, as coming from the Greek, which *therefore* Milton did not understand. Or again, when Bentley remarks that

> "Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
> Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth,"—*Par. Lost*, i. 619.

is suggested by Ovid's

> "Ter conata loqui, ter fletibus ora rigabat,"—*Metam.* xi. 419.

the Doctor has pointed out the wrong authority; because as we find that Sackville in his Induction of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, last stanza, has

> "*Thryse he began* to tell his doleful tale,
> And thryse the sighs did swallow up his voice,"

it must have been not to Ovid, but to Sackville, Milton is indebted. Or, finally (for it is not worth while to waste time on suppositions so ridiculous) when Addison assures us that *miscreated*, *embryon*, and other words, are coined by Milton, appropriately referring to a nonsensical "discourse in Plutarch, which shows us how frequently Homer made use of the same liberty" [well, indeed, was Plutarch qualified to judge of the *fontes* of the language of Homer!]; while, on the contrary, we find these words common in Spenser, Sylvester, Donne, Massinger, Browne, and others, who long precede the *Paradise Lost:* are we to come forward to the rescue of Milton, and defend him from the charge of coining and uttering words not duly licensed, because Addison happened not to have read or remembered the transla-

tion of Du Bartas, the play of Massinger, the poems of Dönne, the *British Pastorals*, or the *Faërie Queene?* On Farmer's principle, that the author is responsible for the ignorance or folly of his critic, all this should be.

He commences by adducing what external testimony he can gather, to prove Shakespeare's want of learning. His witnesses are—I take them as he sets them down:—

1. Ben Jonson's often-quoted line, about Shakespeare's small Latin and less Greek; which Farmer takes care to tell us was quoted more than a century before his time—in 1651—as small Latin, and *no* Greek, by W. Towers, in a panegyric on Cartwright; "whether an error or not," the candid critic will not undertake to decide.

2. Drayton, the countryman and acquaintance of Shakespeare, determines his excellence by his *naturall braine* only.

3. Digges, a wit of the town, before our poet left the stage, is very strong on the point:—

> "Nature only helpt him, for looke thorow
> This whole book,* thou shalt find he doth not borow
> One phrase from Greekes, nor Latines imitate,
> Nor once from vulgar languages translate."

4. Suckling opposed his *easier strain* to the *sweat of the learned Jonson.*

5. Denham assures us that all he had was from *old mother-wit.*

6. Every body remembers Milton's celebration of his *native wood-notes wild.*

7. Dryden observes, prettily enough, that "he wanted not the spectacles of books to read nature."

8. The ever-memorable Hales, of Eton, had too great a knowledge, both of Shakespeare and the ancients, to allow

* The first folio to which the poem in which these lines occur was to have been prefixed.—W. M.

much acquaintance between them; and urged very justly, on the part of genius, in opposition to pedantry, that "if he had not read the ancients, he had not stolen from them; and if any topic was produced from a poet of antiquity, he would undertake to show somewhat on the same subject, at least as well written by Shakespeare."

9. Fuller declares positively that his learning was very little —*nature* was all the *art* used upon him, as *he himself*, if alive, would confess.

10. Shakespeare has in fact confessed it, when he apologized for his *untutored lines* to the Earl of Southampton.

11. "This list of witnesses," says Farmer, triumphantly summing up, "might be easily enlarged, but I flatter myself I shall stand in no need of such evidence."

Taking them *seriatim*, the first is the only one worthy of the slightest attention. Ben Jonson knew Shakespeare intimately, and was in every way qualified to offer an opinion on his learning. All the silly surmises of his hostility or jealousy toward Shakespeare, with which Steevens, and other critics of the same calibre, cram their notes, have been demonstrated to be mere trash, undeserving of a moment's notice. Ben had a warm-hearted affection, a deeply grateful feeling, and a profound admiration for Shakespeare, which he displayed during the life and after the death of his illustrious friend. It is a most unfair and unjust calumny on so eminent an ornament of our literature or any literature, as Ben Jonson, to assert, or insinuate the contrary. Jealousy or envy could have had no part in his appreciation of Shakespeare's learning; and this dictum proves nothing, until we can determine what is the quantity of either, which Ben Jonson would have characterized as *much* Latin or Greek. So practised and exact a scholar would estimate but cheaply any thing short of a very considerable quantity of both. If Bentley were to speak of Farmer, or any other man of similar pretensions to

classical knowledge, it is highly probable the unsparing doctor would have said that such people knew nothing at all of either Greek or Latin; and yet the Master of Emmanuel must have been tolerably well versed in both, even if thus disparaged by the Master of Trinity. The *criticum longe maximus* would have intended nothing more, than that scholars of inferior grade were not to be compared with those *viri clarissimi atque eruditissimi*, among whom *Bentleius doctissimus* was himself so eminent. In like manner Jonson, in this oft-quoted line, only meant to say that Shakespeare's acquirements in the learned languages were small in comparison with those of professed scholars of scholastic fame. But surely it is not necessary to consider that, because Shakespeare was not as erudite as Casaubon, he must be set down as totally ignorant? In fact, we ought to quote Jonson as an authority on the side opposed to that espoused by Farmer; for the possession of any Greek knowledge at all in the days of Elizabeth argues a very respectable knowledge of Latin; because, at that time, it was only through Latin, and by means of no small acquaintance with its literature, the Greek language could be ever so slightly studied.

2. Drayton's compliment to Shakespeare's natural brain—

3. Digges's assurance that Nature only helpt him—

4. Suckling's preference of his easier strain to the learned sweat of Jonson—

5. Denham's assertion, that all he had was from old mother-wit—

6. [I pass Milton for a moment.] Dryden's pretty remark on the spectacles of art, &c.—

7. [I postpone Hales.] Fuller's positive declaration about art and nature, &c.: all these intend the one thing, that the genius of Shakespeare, his natural brain, his old mother-wit, is the gift which, by fastening him upon the thoughts and feelings of man-

kind, has rendered him immortal. Had he possessed all the learning of the Scaligers, would not such acquirements, and the fame attendant, have been matters altogether of no consideration, compared with *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo*—any of his plays? In these hunted-up opinions, all of them hastily thrown out, there runs the false and foolish distinction between nature and art in works of genius. The great masters in any of the elevating branches of human thought excel inferior spirits, as much in the art of composition, in critical arrangement of detail, in the due keeping of minor parts, in exactness as well as in delicacy of taste, as they do in the grander powers that awaken terror or pity, amazement or admiration. Sure I am, that true criticism would detect more material sins against taste and art, the favorite topics of the school of *goût*, in any one of the tragedies of Corneille, Voltaire, or Racine, great as the talents of their authors unquestionably were, than hypercriticism could venture to point out as such in all the tragedies of Shakespeare. Men, however, who are full of the idea that there is some thing opposed to each other in poetical art and poetical nature, may justly imagine that, where they see the latter so transcendant, there is a necessary absence of the former. Suckling, for example, when he prefers the easier strain of Shakespeare to the learned sweat of Jonson, implies an opinion that the sweat was owing to an abundance of learning, and the easiness, therefore, to a want of it. He need not have looked further than the *Comus* of his own contemporary to find that grace, airiness, and elegance, almost rivalling the easiest parts of the *As you Like It* of Shakespeare, may abound in a mask written by one more learned still than Jonson.

8. What the ever-memorable Hales of Eton [who, notwithstanding his epithet, Farmer says, "is, I fear, almost forgotten;" *i. e.* in the time of his *Essay;* in our time he is wholly so] maintained is true enough, but nothing to the point. From

Shakespeare, passages on any given subject can no doubt be produced, rivalling the noblest of the ancient authors, and surpassing most of them; and he has others peculiar to himself, in paths not before trodden. How does this prove that he had never read the classics? If the prayer of Milton to Urania, that she would assist him in soaring above the Aonian mount, above the flight of Pegasean wing, were granted, does it therefore follow that he had never visited the mountain of the Muses, or fled with the steed of Pagan poesy? Or when Lucretius boasts—

> "Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
> Trita solo,"—*De Rer. Nat.* 1. vi. i.

are we to imagine that he never was in company with those who travelled with the Pierides, and had trodden in their habitual paths?

9. Milton's *wood-notes wild* are, indeed, familiar to every one; but the reference to them here proves only that Farmer misunstood what the poet meant. The passage in which they occur is

> "Towered cities please us then,
> And the busy hum of men,
> * * * * *
> And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
> With *mask* and antique pageantry;
> Such sights as youthful poets *dream*
> *On summer eves* by haunted stream.
> Then to the well-trod stage anon,
> If Jonson's learned sock be on,
> Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild,"—*L'Allegro*, 115–134.

i. e., the mirthful man desires to see at court *masks*, in which Ben Jonson excelled, and in the theatre his learned comedies. And as the courtly pageantry summons before him romantic visions, then to the stage he goes to see those poetic *dreams on summer eves* embodied by the fanciful creations of Shakespeare, sweetly singing free forest ditties, warbling, without any other

source of inspiration but the sylvan scene around, notes native to himself, and equally native to the wood — the "*boscaresce inculte avene*" of Tasso.—*Gier. Lib.* c. vii. 6. The reference in *L'Allegro* is almost by name to *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and has nothing to do with the general question of Shakespeare's learning. If we wished to be critical in Farmerlike fashion, we might observe, that the title which Milton borrows from *Love's Labor's Lost*, to apply to the poet himself, belongs in the original to a character precisely the reverse of being unlearned—

> "This *child of fancy*, that Armado hight,
> For interim to our studies, shall relate,
> In high-born words, the worth of many a knight
> From tawny Spain, lost in the world's debate,"
> *Love's Labor's Lost*, Act I. scene 1.

— one who for himself would prefer to use *veni, vidi, vici;* but, for information of the "base and obscure vulgar," condescends to "anatomise" it into English (Act IV. scene 1); who is described by Holofernes (Act V. scene 1) as too peregrinate — a racker of orthography, and so forth; and who concludes the play by a duet ("When daisies pied," &c.) between Hiems and Ver, whom he stoops to inform us to be Winter and Spring.

10. The poet's own declaration to his noble patron, that his lines are *untutored*, is, it seems, a proof of his want of learning. With such critics we must, indeed, talk by the card. Are we to take it for granted that Horace, whose boast in his *Odes* is that,

> "Exegi monumentum ære perennius,"—*Od.* lib. iii. od. 30.

wishes us to believe him at his word, when he tells us, in his *Satires*, I. iv. 42, that we are not to consider him a poet? that Persius really thought himself a "semipaganus," prol. ver. 6? that Juvenal was in earnest when he classed himself with a ridiculous versifier? I take these at random, merely because I

happen to have a collection of Latin poetry lying before me; for hundreds of other specimens of this mock-modesty might be collected in every literature. Are we to believe Shakespeare himself, for example, when he makes his chorus tell us, at the end of *Henry V.*, that the play which contains "O! for a muse of fire!"—the exhortations of Archbishop Chichely—the commonwealth of the bees—Henry's reflections on ceremony—his glorious speeches, urging the attack on Harfleur, and rousing to the battle of St. Crispin's day—the chorus descriptive of the eve of Agincourt—and many other passages of poetic thought and brilliancy, were written "with rough, and all unable pen," or suppose with the chorus at its beginning, that it was dictated by a "flat, unraised, spirit?" We must take these things not merely with a grain, but a handful of salt. Farmer himself, if he had had the fortune of being *elected* a bishop, would, I venture to say, have thought it an extremely harsh construction of the text, if the chapter had construed his "*Nolo Episcopari*" as literally as he here construes Shakespeare's confession of his being *untutored.*

11. There only remains of the cloud of witnesses Farmer's own testimony that the number might easily be enlarged. This is a figure of rhetoric of which I know not the name; but it is of frequent use in courts and parliaments, when the speaker, having said every thing he could think of, concludes by, "I shall say no more;" and that precisely because he has no more to say. Farmer had exhausted every authority that he could gather; and the sum of his labors is, that Jonson, in the pride of his own erudition, thought little of the classical attainments of Shakespeare; that Hales asserted, and truly, that he could find parallel passages to the best things in the classics in our own poet; that Milton admired the wild and native forest poetry of *Midsummer Night's Dream;* and that readers in general, who do not take the trouble of critically examining the writings

they enthusiastically admire, are so struck with the original genius of the author, that they deem it unnecessary to suppose him in any considerable degree indebted to the ordinary aids of learning and scholarship. Be it observed, that not one of them except Ben Jonson had better opportunities of forming a judgment than ourselves. Digges would find himself much puzzled to prove, that in the whole folio of the plays there is not one phrase imitated from Greek and Latin, or a single translation. Fuller, who says, that if the author were alive he would confess his learning to have been little, knew scarcely any thing about him, as his few trifling, vague, and erroneous anecdotes prove. Denham may assure us Shakespeare was indebted merely to his old mother-wit; but who assured Denham? In fact, the ignorance of every thing connected with Shakespeare, displayed by wits and critics of the days of Charles II., is absolutely wonderful, and not at all creditable to the mob of gentlemen who writ with ease.

A lamer case than Farmer's, was in fact never exhibited, so far as evidence is considered. Such, however, was not his own opinion; for, having generously left some testimony behind, as unnecessary, he proceeds to go through the various critics and commentators who have held different opinions on the question. Gildon, whom, of course, he insults, because he was insulted in the *Dunciad;* Sewell; Upton, declare absolutely for the learning of Shakespeare. Pope thinks there is but little ground for the common opinion of his want of learning; Theobald is unwilling to believe him to be so poor a scholar as many have labored to represent him, but will not be too positive; Dr. Grey thinks his knowledge of Greek and Latin can not be reasonably called in question; Dr. Dodd considers it proved that he was not such a novice in learning as some people pretend; and Mr. Whalley — But I must transcribe this passage from Farmer: — "Mr. Whalley, the ingenious editor of Jonson, hath written a

piece expressly on this side of the question; perhaps from a very excusable partiality he was willing to draw Shakespeare from the field of nature to classic ground, where alone he knew his author could possibly cope with him." I must transcribe this, I say, because it is a beautiful specimen of that style of fine writing, and elegant turn of compliment, which must have been irresistible in a common room. Warburton exposes the weakness of some arguments from suspected imitations, but offers others which Farmer supposes he could have as easily refuted. And Dennis, who is slandered from the same motive as that which dictated the insult to Gildon, declares, that "he who allows Shakespeare had learning, and a learning with the ancients, ought to be looked upon as a detractor from the glory of Great Britain,"—a subject which very much disturbed Pope's unlucky victim.

Farmer's principal quarrel seems to be with Upton, whom he treats most unfairly. Of him he says, "He, like the learned knight, at every anomaly of grammar or metre,

> "'Hath hard words ready to show why,
> And tell what rule he did it by.'

How would the old bard have been astonished to have found that he had very skilfully given the *trochaic dimeter brachycatalectic*, COMMONLY called the *ithyphallic*, measure to the witches of *Macbeth;* and that now and then a halting verse afforded a most beautiful instance of the *pes proceleusmaticus!*" I have followed the typography of Farmer, because in that seems to me to lie all his jest. What Shakespeare's knowledge of Greek and Latin prosody, if any, might have been, we can not tell; and perhaps he neither knew nor cared for the technical names given by their prosodians to feet and verses; nor shall I, in this inappropriate place, be tempted to inquire whether these names are at all applicable to English verse.

Perhaps they are not, and yet nobody objects to calling our ordinary heroic verse, iambic. Bentley, I know, maintains, in the preface to his edition of Terence, that, "ut Latini omnia metrorun genera de Græcis acceperunt, ita nostrates sua de Latinis;" and makes it, in his own energetic way, "matter of complaint and indignation [*dolendum atque indignandum*], that from the time of the revival of letters, liberally educated boys should be driven by the ferula and the birch [*ferulâ scuticâque cogi*] to learn dactylic metres, which the genius of our native language does not admit; while, through the fault of their masters, they are wholly ignorant of the Terentian metres, which, nevertheless, they are continually singing, without knowing it, at home and in the streets." Bentley proceeds to give examples, one of which is—"Quin et Iambicus ille καταληκτικος Terentio multum et merito amatus apud nostros quoque in magna gratia est:—

'Nam sí remit-	-tent quíppiam	Philúmenam	dolóres.
He's décently	run through the lungs	and thére's an end	o' búlly.'"

Now, certainly the author of this elegant English line—it looks like one of Tom D'Urfey's—would be much astonished to be told he had written an iambic tetrameter catalectic; and yet, on Bentley's principle, nothing could be more true. Admit that the Greek and Latin method of scansion is applicable to English verse, and what Farmer sneers at in Upton is indisputably correct. "Shakespeare," says the learned prebendary, in his *Critical Observations*, p. 340, "uses not only the iambic, but the trochaic measure: as, for example, the trochaic dimeter brachycatalectic, commonly called the ithyphallic, consisting of three trochees.

"Bácchĕ	Bácchĕ	Bácchĕ.
Whére hast	thóu been,	síster?"—*Macb.*

Upton says not a word of Shakespeare's *skilful* use of this metre; and "*the* COMMONLY *called*," which excites the typo-

graphic merriment of Farmer, is but the ordinary phraseology of the prosodians. "*Metrum est trochaicum brachycatalecticum*, VULGO *ithyphallicum*;" *i. e.* commonly so called by the people who wrote it or sang it; not, of course, commonly by another people among whom it can be known only to laborious scholars. If we described a particular measure, as "the octosyllabic metre, *commonly* called Hudibrastic," the phrase would sound strange and pedantic to those who had never heard of Hudibras. The *pes proceleusmaticus*, Upton truly observes, sometimes of itself constitutes an anapæstic line. If, then, we call such verses as "ŏvĕr pārk. ŏvĕr pāle," anapæstic, we must admit that Shakespeare uses occasionally the license of the ancients in introducing spondees and dactyles in the metre:—

"Throūgh būsh | throūgh brīar,
Throūgh floōd | throūgh fīre,"

are Upton's instances, p. 343. He does not represent them as *beautiful* examples of the *pes proceleusmaticus*; and I can not see that there is any thing halting in their versification. Shakespeare, admitting Bentley's theory to be correct, and the ordinary nomenclature of prosodians applicable to English verse, wrote iambics, trochaics, anapæstics, in all the varieties of monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, catalectic, acatalectic, brachycatalectic, and other species and genera of metre designated by epithets of learned sound, just as M. Jourdain spoke prose all his life without knowing it; or as in Ireland, the finest peasantry under the sun (when they can get them) feast upon *solana tuberosa* condimented with *muriate of soda*, which, to their unenlightened minds, appear to be nothing more than potatoes and salt. Yet you would not laugh at the botanist or chemist who gave these substances their scientific names. Why then think it ridiculous that the prosodian should make use of the phraseology of his art? But suppose him perfectly absurd

in this, as well as in considering the English words *haver* and *having*, Greek expressions derived from ἐχεια and προς τον ἐχοντα; in deriving *Truepenny* from τρυπανον; in referring the gravedigger's speech, "Ay, tell me that and *unyoke*," to the βουλυτος of the Greeks; or in describing the "*orphan* heirs of fixed destiny" as an elegant Græcism, ὀρφανος ab ὀρφνος, acting in darkness and obscurity; all of which, being precisely the most ridiculous things in Upton, Farmer has carefully picked out; what is it to Shakespeare? How does it promote Farmer's argument?

It promotes not his argument at all; but it is of this dishonest use, that readers, whose minds are not generally turned to classical or etymological criticism, on seeing these things heaped together in jest, as ridiculously applied to an author so vernacularly popular as their familiar and national dramatist, are led to think that *all* disquisitions of the kind are equally laughable; and that he who imagines Shakespeare to have known any thing whatever of a species of erudition exhibited to them in so absurd a form, must be nothing better than a peddling pedant, unworthy of being attended to. It being considered in the highest degree improbable that Shakespeare purposely wrote "Where hast thou been, sister?" as a trochaic dimeter brachycatalectic; and something rather comical to find *Truepenny* derived from the τρυπανον of the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, with the learned interpretation of his scholiast annexed; it is easy for such logicians as Dr. Farmer to conclude that if such be the shifts necessary to give "the old bard" a reputation for learning, the cause must be desperate indeed. It is, however, incumbent on them to show that they *are* necessary, and that Shakespeare is to be answerable for the etymological crochets of Upton. Before we part with him, let me say that there is a considerable quantity of valuably-directed reading in Upton's observations, and occasionally a display of good sense and sound criticism. He must not be judged by the appearance he

makes in Farmer's pamphlet. Being a venturous etymologist, he indulges sometimes in whimsical escapades — as which of the tribe does not? — sometimes more and sometimes less laughable than those of his brethren. He has nothing, for example, so wonderful as Ménage's derivation of the French word *chez* from the Latin *apud;* and yet it would require much hardihood or ignorance to laugh at Ménage.

Dismissing, therefore, Dr. Farmer's war upon Upton, let us come to his main charges affecting Shakespeare.

1. He first addresses himself to *Antony and Cleopatra*, in the third act of which Octavius says—

> —— "Unto her
> He gave the 'stablishment of Egypt; made her
> Of Lower Syria, Cyprus, *Lydia*,
> Absolute queen."

Lydia, says the critic, should be *Libya*, as in Plutarch τρωτην μεν ἀπεφηνε Κλεοπατραν βασιλισσαν . . . Διβυης κ. τ. λ. Retain the reading *Lydia*, says Farmer; for Shakespeare took it not from the Greek of Plutarch, but the English of Sir Thomas North. "First of all he did establish Cleopatra queen of Egypt, of Cyprus, of *Lydia*, and the Lower Syria."

2. Again in the fourth act:—

> "My messenger
> He hath whipped with rods; dares me to personal combat,
> Cæsar to Antony. Let the old ruffian know
> I have many other ways to die; meantime
> Laugh at his challenge."

This is altered by Upton into—

> "Let the old ruffian know
> He hath many other ways to die; meantime,
> I laugh at his challenge."

This relieves Augustus from admitting his inferiority in personal combat to Antony, and is exactly what we find in Plutarch.

Retain the reading, however, replies Farmer; because Shakespeare was misled by the ambiguity of the old translation. "Antonius sent again to challenge Cæsar to fight him; Cæsar answered, That *he* had many other ways to die than so."

3. In the third act of *Julius Cæsar*, Antony, reading the will, says:—

> "Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
> His private arbors, and new-planted orchards
> On *this* side Tiber."

Read, says Theobald, on *that* side Tiber.

> "*Trans* Tiberim, prope Cæsaris hortos,"

and Plutarch τεραν του ποταμου, *beyond* the Tiber. Retain the text, says Farmer; for we find in North, "He left his gardens and arbors unto the people, which he had on *this* side of the river Tiber."

4. "Hence," *i. e.* from Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, proceeds the Essay, "had our author his characteristic knowledge of Brutus and Antony, upon which much argumentation for his learning hath been founded; and hence, *literatim*, the epitaph on Timon, which it was once presumed he had corrected from the blunders of the Latin version by his own superior knowledge of the original."

5. Pope says, "The speeches copied from Plutarch in *Coriolanus* may, I think, be as well made an instance of the learning of Shakespeare, as those copied from Cicero in *Catiline* of Ben Jonson." To confute this opinion, Dr. Farmer extracts, at length, the famous speech of Volumnia:—

> "Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
> And state of bodies would bewray what life
> We've led since thy exile," &c.,

which he contrasts with the same speech in North's *Plutarch*, also transcribed at length. "If we helde our peace (my sonne)

and determined not to speeke, the state of our poor bodies and poorest sight of our rayment would easily bewray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad," &c. It certainly is indisputable that Shakespeare has done very little more than to throw North's prose into blank verse.

These are all these passages from Plutarch. "I could furnish you," says Farmer, "with many more instances, but these are as good as a thousand." On this figure of speech I have remarked already. Farmer brought all he thought of any value to his argument, and ceased furnishing more when he had no more to furnish. Let us now consider what he *has* furnished.

1. That in Shakespeare Antony is made to give Cleopatra *Lydia*, when in Plutarch, and in fact, he gave her *Libya* is perfectly true. It is true, also, that the mistake occurs in Sir Thomas North; but an exact hunter after these *choses de néant* ought to have looked somewhat further. North avowedly translated not from the original, but from the French of Amyot. Farmer quotes the epigram about it:—

> "'Twas Greek at first, that Greek was Latin made;
> That Latin, French; that French to English strayed," &c.

And in Amyot* we find "qu'il establissoit premièrement Cléopatra, Reyne d'Ægypt, de Cypre, de Lidye, et de la basse Syrie," p. 1132, ed. 1579. Was Shakespeare, if he hunted at all for an authority (which, of course, he did not), bound to hunt further than his original's original?

* In Amyot it was at first probably only a misprint, but I find it is continued even in the editions of An. X. and XI. In Leonard Aretin, from whom he probably translated, the word is correctly Libyæ, as it appears in the edition of Gemusæus, Lugdun. 1552, vol. iii. p. 635. There might have been an earlier edition; for Gemusæus says, in his dedication, that he presents Plutarch "civitate Romanâ *non quidem nunc primo donatum*, sed, Græcorum collatione exemplarium, mendis quæ merant permultæ, et valde graves detersis mirifice restitutum." This was the kind of work which Farmer and critics of his caste seem to have expected from Shakespeare — that he was to present North "Græcorum collatione exemplarium — mirifice restitutum."— W. M.

2. In the repartee of Octavius, the point is this: "I decline Antonius's challenge, because *he* has many other ways to die [public execution, suicide, &c.], besides being killed in duel with me, which will be the certain consequence if I meet him." As it appears in the received text of Shakespeare, it implies, "I decline the challenge, because *I* have many other ways to die, besides that arising from the chance of throwing away my life in a brawl with an old ruffian." This hardly implies a confession of inferiority, although it is not the original repartee. But I am not quite so sure that Shakespeare wrote it as we have it. It appears thus:—

> "Let the old ruffian know
> I have many other ways to die; meantime,
> Laugh at his challenge.
> *Mecænas.* Cæsar must know," &c.

The last line being unmetrical, is mended by inserting *needs:*

> "Laugh at his challenge — Cæsar *needs* must know."

Taking the repartee *literally* as it appears in North, Shakespeare's ordinary practice may afford a better reading:—

> "Let the old ruffian know
> *He hath many other ways to die than so,*
> Meantime, I laugh at 's challenge.
> *Mec.* Cæsar must know."

Now, where we find certain proofs of negligent editing, we have a right to give our suspicions of incorrectness fuller scope. May not this passage have been amended by the player-editors, or the printers? Is it any very violent conjecture to imagine that Shakespeare had seized the spirit of Plutarch, and written,

> "*He hath many other ways to die than so,*"

being the *exact* words of North, without alteration of a letter, except the necessary change of ha*th* for ha*d*, and that some printing or editorial blundering has jumbled the pronouns. The

supposition is in complete conformity with Shakespeare's practice; and it removes the metrical difficulty.

3. It is true that Cæsar bequeathed to the Roman people his gardens on *that* side Tiber. Περαν του ποταμου, as Plutarch translates *trans Tiberim*. North, followed by Shakespeare, gives it on *this* side. The mistake, again, is to be referred to Amyot—*au deça* for *au delà*. And I repeat my former question, Was Shakespeare bound to look further?

4. From North, Shakespeare had his *characteristic* knowledge of Brutus and Antony! Were it said that Plutarch, either Greek or Latin, French or English, supplied Shakespeare with his materials for drawing those characters, nobody would demur: but I should be surprised, indeed, if any one maintained that in the dry bones of the old Bœotian there could be found any thing more than the skeleton of the living men called out of the valley of Jehoshaphat by Shakespeare. Plutarch or North gave him the characters of his Greek or Roman heroes, just as much as Holinshed and Hall gave him those of Henry V. or Richard III.; as *Saxo-Grammaticus, or the Tragedie of Hamblet*, supplied him with Hamlet the Dane; as Fordon or Buchanan, or the English chroniclers, helped him to *create* Macbeth; or the old *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* furnished him with the characters, grave and gay, brilliant and tragic, which fill the scene of that "story of such wo." This will not pass. The epitaph of Timon is certainly to be found in North—so minute a critic as Farmer ought not to have said *literatim*, because more than a letter, a whole word, consisting of eight letters, "*wretches*," is altered into another word of eight letters also, but for the most part different, "*caitives*;" or, perhaps, even of nine, if, *more majorum*, you spell it "*caitiffes*."

5. I have already admitted that Volumnia's speech, in *Coriolanus*, is nothing more than a transposition, as Bayes would call it, of North's prose into blank verse. It is, therefore, clearly

proved that Shakespeare used Sir Thomas's translation as the text-book of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus;* that in *three*, or, if my reading be admitted, *two* passages, it misled him; and that in a fourth he merely versified its prose. I protest, however, against being supposed to admit, that in North or in Plutarch he found *his* Greek and Roman characters. How does all this trumpery prove that he *could* not have read Plutarch in the original?

In this manner, it will be replied:—If he had read the original, he would not have made the blunders of *Lydia* for *Libya*, or "*on this side Tiber*," for "on that side Tiber." This is petty criticism indeed. Did any one ever imagine that it was the duty of Shakespeare to turn verbal critic, and correct the blunders of the versions of North or Amyot by his own superior Greek erudition? and the answer will be, "Yes, Theobald."

A worse-used man does not exist in our literature than this same poor Theobald. He was, in truth, the first useful commentator on Shakespeare, Rowe and Pope having done little or nothing more than adorn the art of editorship with their names. It is the commentary of Theobald that guides all his successors, including those who most insult him. His reading, though ill digested, was multifarious, and his skill in conjectural criticism of no mean order. That he was full of self-conceit, and inspired by a jealous dislike of Pope, which tinges his notes with unpleasant acerbities, and crowds them with disproportionately triumphant swellings over the detection of real or supposed errors in the merest trifles, is not to be denied. Pope, he thought, and with some justice, had treated him unfairly, in deviating from the paths of poetry, to intrude into the walks of commentatorship, especially as it was known that Theobald had been long engaged upon Shakespeare, before the bookseller enlisted Pope. It was hard, he felt, that a great name should be called in to blight the labors of his life; and he was determined to

show that, however great the name might be in its proper region, it was small enough when it wandered elsewhere. He might fairly complain against the literary ambition, which, not satisfied with its triumphs in the *Essay on Man*, in *Abelard and Eloisa*, in the translation of Homer, in the *Rape of the Lock*, in epic and pastoral, wit and satire, was resolved to crush an humbler votary of letters, whose highest pretension was not loftier than to shine as a scholiast. Ahab, when not content with governing the kingdom of Israel he coveted Naboth's poor garden of herbs, and obtained it through the owner's destruction, could not have appeared more atrocious than Pope in the eyes of Theobald; and having found his enemy where he had him at some advantage, he resolved to show no mercy.

It will be admitted, also, that his notes are often of an unconscionable length — a fault which he shares with the classical commentators. His contemporary, Hemsterhusius, for example, so much admired by his brother critics [*at quantus vir!* is the enthusiastic exclamation of Ilgen, on the mention of his name], is thrice as prosy. Theobald had vowed to treat Shakespeare as a classic, and therefore bestowed his tediousness upon him with as much good-will and generosity, as his more erudite fellow-laborers did upon the authors of Greece and Rome. But with all these defects, it was he who set the example of a proper collation of the original editions — for as to his predecessors, Rowe did not collate at all, and Pope's collations are so slight and careless as to be scarcely worth notice — he examined the text with minute accuracy — he read much of that reading, which Pope — who as a poet and a man of taste was perfectly right in despising, but as an editor equally wrong in neglecting — stigmatised, because he was too lazy to consult, as being never read, alluding (in the *Dunciad*) to the very case of Theobald, and thereby threw much light upon the meaning of his author; while, by pointing out the path to other commentators,

he was the indirect cause of throwing much more; and, on the whole, he must be considered as one of the most useful pioneers in Shakespearian commentatorship. He did not aspire to much higher glory.

I am dwelling on Theobald, because I find him occupying so much attention in this pamphlet of Farmer's. Independently of fifty sneers directed against him for his edition of Shakespeare, the Doctor goes out of his way to discuss at much length the authenticity of the *Double Falsehood*, "which Mr. Theobald was desirous of palming on the world as a posthumous play of Shakespeare." If this be an error, as undoubtedly it is, it is almost shared by Pope, who, as Farmer himself remarks, refers it to the Shakespearian age. With great sagacity, the pamphlet proceeds to show that the accenting of *áspect* in the modern manner, instead of *aspéct* in the more ancient, detects the later date of the play. This is followed by a discussion on its pronunciation in Milton, with the accustomed sneer on "such commentators"—one of them being Bentley. Then comes his opinion that the play was written by Shirley; wound up by a couple of passages from that dramatist and Donne, to which Farmer thinks Milton was indebted in his *Paradise Lost*. All this needless digression is introduced merely to have a fling at Theobald, for having wished to appropriate to himself some lines, which it seems were particularly admired—I know not by whom—from the *Double Falsehood*, which, "after all, is superior to Theobald." *

* "After all, *The Double Falsehood* is superior to Theobald. One passage, and one only, in the whole play, he pretended to have written:—

—— "'Strike up, my masters;
But touch the strings with a religious softness;
Teach Sound to languish through the night's dull ear,
Till Melancholy start from her lazy couch,
And Carelessness grow convert to Attention.'

These lines were particularly admired; and his vanity could not resist the

As it is no very remarkable crime to be a bad editor of Shakespeare, we might wonder why this poor devil of a critic was so rancorously hunted, did we not find the cause in his having incurred the hostility of Pope in the plenitude of the poet's power and popularity, and enjoyed the friendship of Warburton, at the period of the embryo bishop's poverty. Pope having made him the hero of the *Dunciad*, it was necessary that Warburton should for ever disclaim all association with his quondam brother in Grub Street, and show, by a perpetual

opportunity of claiming them; but his claim had been more easily allowed to any other part of the performance."—FARMER. The poetry appears to me to be as dull as the wit of the doctor. I subjoin Farmer's illustration of Milton from Donne, to show that if he had pleased to question Milton's learning, he might have done it in the same way that he has questioned Shakespeare's. "You must not think me infected with the spirit of Lauder, if I give you another of Milton's imitations:—

—— "'The swan with *arched neck*
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet.'"—Book vii. v. 438, &c.

"The ancient poets," says Mr. Richardson, "have not hit upon this beauty; so lavish have they been of the beauty of the swan. Homer calls the swan *long-necked*, δουλιχοδείρων; but how much more *pittoresque* if he had *arched* this length of neck." For *this beauty*, however, Milton was beholden to Donne; whose name, I believe, at present, is better known than his writings·

—— "Like a ship in her full trim,
A *swan*, so white that you may unto him
Compare all whitenesse, but himselfe to none,
Glided along; and as he glided watch'd,
And with his *arched neck* this poore fish catch'd."
Progress of the Soul, st. xxiv.

The arching of the neck is unquestionably to be found in Donne, but *rowing the oary feet* comes from Silius Italicus:—

"Haud secus Eridani stagnis, ripâve Caystri
Innatat albus olor, pronoque immobile corpus
Dat fluvio, *et pedibus tacitas eremigat undas.*"

In the Farmer style of argument it would be easy to prove that Milton had never read Silius, because he might have read Donne.—W. M.

strain of insult, that nothing beyond a slight and contemptuous approach toward the relation of patron and dependent ever existed between them. Hence his studied confusion in the shape of an antithesis, between his "accidental connections" with Theobald and Sir Thomas Hanmer. "The one was recommended to me as a poor man, the other as a poor critic; and to each of them, at different times, I communicated a great number of observations, which they managed, as they saw fit, to the relief of their several distresses. As to Mr. Theobald, who wanted money, I allowed him to print what I gave him for his own advantage," &c. This is pitiful work. Warburton was just as poor as Theobald when he pretends he patronised him; and it will be seen by Nichol's *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Nineteenth Century*, that they were on such terms of critical intimacy as to make it as likely that Theobald assisted Warburton in such matters as Warburton Theobald. It was in after-years, when the fame of the bishop was at its zenith, that the accidental discovery of a letter from him to Concanen — who is abused in the *Dunciad* for no earthly reason but that, being a small political writer, he was connected with some ephemeral publications which provoked Pope, and is consequently "whipt at the cart's tail" in Warburton's notes — proved that he had, in the commencement of his literary career, been intimately connected with "the Dunces." This discovery made a great noise, as if it had been a matter of the slightest importance, which indeed it was not, except for the purpose of annoying the Warburtonians* — as it did in no small degree —

* Warburton was dead about a year before Malone ventured on any thing so desperate as publishing the letter, though it had been found several years previously, and then he prefaced it with a whining apology. See the history of the whole affair in Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. v. p. 534; and Nichol's *Illustrations of Literary History*, vol. ii. p. 195, where will be found a most extended correspondence of Warburton, Theobald, and Concanen. The sycophancy of Hurd to Warburton, *Lit. Anec.* p. 535, on the subject of his

and the letter, with the history of its detection, is duly printed in Malone's edition of Shakespeare, among other irrelevant matter, to the needless swelling of that *crescens cadaver*, and made the subject of various sagacious remarks and expressions of wonder — so great was the impression of awe produced by the satires of Pope. The *Dunciad* is now forgotten; and, but for the surrounding matter of the poems it accompanies, would never be reprinted. As it is Pope's, it must make part of every edition of his works; for, as some of his happiest lines tell us:

> "Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
> Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
> The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare.
> But wonder how the devil they got there."

But it was once esteemed quite as rich and rare as the amber in which it is now preserved, and nothing was considered more scandalous than to refrain from insulting its victims. Mallet, for example, a paltry creature, thought he said some thing very witty and wise, as well as tending to bow his way up in the world, when, in his *Verbal Criticism*, he vented such a distich as (I quote from memory; it is not worth while verifying such things):—

> "But not a spring of laurel graced these ribalds,
> From slashing Bentley down to piddling Tibbalds."

And Farmer, in the pamphlet I am following, appends a note, to inform us that Dennis was expelled his college for attempting to stab a man in the dark. "Pope," he adds, "would have been glad of this anecdote." Perhaps he might; for, with all his genius, he was in his personal spites small-minded. But what has it to do in an *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare?* Exactly this. To those with whom Shakespeare was an old

former acquaintance with Concanen is sickening. I wish somebody would arrange these books of Nichol's, they are full of the most valuable matter, but presented in a manner so confused, as to render consulting them a work of no small puzzle.—W. M.

bard, the *Dunciad* was an immortal poem, as worthy of finding its scholiasts as Aristophanes; and Farmer wished to assist with his bit of knowledge. To quit Theobald, however, let me remark, that a satire in which Defoe appears only as a pilloried pamphleteer; Cibber as a dull dunce; Mrs. Centlivre as a cook's wife; Bentley as a letter-quibbling blockhead; Burnet as a hack paragraph-writer; and so forth, can not be applauded for its justice. It is really a pity to see so much mastery of language and harmony of verse wasted on purposes so unworthy; and I have often thought it still more matter of regret that Johnson himself, ragged of knee, and gobbling of broken meat behind a screen in St. John's Gate, cheered by the applause of Walter Harte, admitted to the honor of being dinner-companion of his peddling employer (if the story be true, which, however, may be doubted)—that Johnson, tattered in attire by the tailoring, and half-starved by the dinnering, of Cave, should have followed the fashion in speaking hardly of an unfortunate wight already blasted by lightnings flung by the *dii majorum* among the literature of the day.

We have now got very nearly through half Doctor Farmer's pamphlet, and the main fact as yet established is, that Shakespeare used North's translation of Plutarch. All the Greek that remains to be disposed of is:—

1. The passage in *Timon of Athens*, Act IV. Scene 3:—

> "The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
> Robs the vast sea. The moon's an arrant thief," &c.

is generally referred to Anacreon's nineteenth ode, ἡ γη μελαίνα πινει, κ. τ. λ. And some one [name not quoted] imagines that it would be puzzling to prove that there was a Latin translation of Anacreon at the time Shakespeare wrote his *Timon of Athens*. "This challenge," replies Farmer, "is peculiarly unhappy; for I do not at present recollect *any other classic* (if, in-

deed, with great deference to Mynheer De Pauw"—this is wit —"Anacreon may be numbered among them) that was *originally* published with *two* Latin translations." And what of that? It may show the bibliographical ignorance of the anonymous some one, and the bibliographical knowledge of Farmer; but how does it affect Shakespeare? At first sight, we should suppose that some concession to his "small Latin" was here intended; that if the "old bard" could not be allowed to understand the Greek of Anacreon, he might be deemed sufficiently learned to read the Latin of Stephanus or Andreas. But no. Puttenham, in his *Arte of Poetry*, quotes some one of a reasonable good facilitie in translation, who had translated *certaine* of Anacreon's odes from the translation of Ronsard, the French poet. Now, continues Farmer, this identical ode is to be met in Ronsard; and, in compassion to the ignorance of his readers, he transcribes it:—

> "La terre les eaux va boivant
> L'arbre la boit par sa racine," &c.

Now I continue, as Farmer had not seen the book referred to by Puttenham, and could not therefore *know* that it contained a version of this ode from Ronsard, he was at least hardy in his reference to it. The plagiary censured by Puttenham was John Southern; and it is nothing to Farmer's purpose, if we find the identical Anacreontic in Ronsard, if it is not in Southern also. If it happens, that it is not one of the stolen odes—*i. e.* if they were stolen, which, with deference to Puttenham, does not appear so very clear—in Southern's collection, Farmer's argument falls to the ground. But suppose it there, and in the most prominent place, what then? If Mr. Milman wrote a tragedy now, and introduced into it an imitation of Anacreon, are we, therefore to contend that he was indebted for it to Mr. Moore, and could not consult the original Greek? The argument is, that wherever an English translation of a classic could be found,

no matter how worthless or obscure, we are to presume that Shakespeare made *that* his study, from inability to read any other language. Verily, this is begging the question. I think it highly probable that Shakespeare had the idea from Ronsard, whose popularity had not been effaced in his time; but, really, it is not so wonderful a feat to master the Greek of Anacreon as to make me consider it impossible that he drew it from the fountain-head. At all events, we may contend that he did *not* draw it from the source indicated by Farmer, until it is proved that it is there to draw.*

2. Mrs. Lenox maintains, that in *Troilus and Cressida*, when Achilles is roused to battle by the death of Patroclus, Shakespeare must have had the *Iliad* itself in view, as the incident is not to be found in the old story — the *Recuyel of the Historyes of Troy*.

3. Mr. Upton is positive the *sweet oblivious antidote* inquired after by Macbeth could be nothing but the nepenthe described in the *Odyssey*.

Νηπενθές τ' ἄχολον τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἁπάντων.

There is, contends Dr. Farmer, no necessity of sending us to the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey;* for the circumstance of Patroclus might be learned from Alexander Barclay's *Ship of Fooles:* "Who list the story of Patroclus to reade," &c.; and nepenthe† more fully from Spenser than from Homer himself. Certainly more fully; for Homer dismisses it in six or seven lines. *Od.* δ. 220–226: but Spenser does not give one remarkable word which Homer supplies, and of which we find the equivalent in

* The only notice I know of Southern is in the *European Magazine* for June, 1788, where, as the writer, though he must have known of Farmer's pamphlet, says nothing of this translation of Ronsard, or Anacreon, it is probable that it does not exist.—W. M.

† In one of the notes to his *Homeric Ballads*, Dr. Maginn half-seriously endeavored to show, from the variety of ingredients and pleasant effects of the liquor, that nepenthe was—*punch!*—M.

Shakespeare. I copy what Farmer quotes from the *Faërie Queene*, b. iv. c. iii. st. 43:—

> "Nepenthe is a drinck of soveragne grace,
> Devized by the gods, for to asswage
> Hart's grief, and bitter gall away to chace;
> Instead thereof sweet peace and quietage,
> It doth establish in the troubled mind," &c.

This is unquestionably a fine poetical amplification of Homer, but it misses the word ἐπιλήθων—*oblivious*. Where did Shakespeare find this? Perhaps in the Latin translation—"malorum *oblivionem* inducens omnium." Perhaps in Virgil's "longa *oblivia* potant." Certainly not in Spenser. It is fair to Upton to remark, that he is not positive on the point; nor does he say the antidote could be nothing else but the nepenthe described in the *Odyssey*. He quote the passage from *Macbeth*, and then in a note (*Crit. Obser.* p. 56) merely says: "Alluding to the nepenthe, a certain mixture, of which, perhaps, opium was one of the ingredients. Homer's *Odyssey*, δ. 521, Νηπενθες," &c. There is no positiveness here; the allusion to the nepenthe is plain, no matter whence Shakespeare derived it, and Upton merely indicates the source from which it must have originally been derived. I think a critical examination of the passages would lead to a strong suspicion that Shakespeare had Homer in his eye. The medicament flung into the bowl by Helen to cheer her guests, was ἄχολον—anger-banishing, one that could "minister to a mind diseased;" νηπενθες, generally interpreted as sorrow-chasing, that could "pluck from the memory a deep-rooted sorrow;" κακων ἐκιλήθων ἁπαντων—oblivion-causing of all troubles; that would "raze out the written troubles of the brain." "Give me the sweet oblivious antidote," says Macbeth, "that would cleanse the stuffed bosom of the perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart;" it is here, says Homer, this nepenthe would check the tear from flowing, even if father, brother, mother, or son,

were slaughtered before the eyes of him who drinks the φαρμακον ἐπηλθον, the oblivious antidote :—

> "That nepenthes, which the wife of Thone,
> In Egypt, gave to Jove-born Helena."*

The coincidence of the passages is so striking, that I think it impossible that Shakespeare should not have read this part of Homer, at least, in the original or translation. There was, in spite of Farmer's affected doubt, no Chapman when *Macbeth* was written to assist him ; but there were some curious French translations, and no lack of versions into the Latin. With respect to the incident of Patroclus, he *might* certainly have found it in Barcley ; but he also *might* have found it in Homer, and I much prefer the latter supposition. *Troilus and Cressida* seems, indeed, written as an antagonism of the Homeric characters, so marked and peculiar, as to leave a strong impression that the originals were studied. It would appear as if Shakespeare was trying his strength against Homer ; as if he said : "The world has, for centuries, rung with the fame of *your* Ulysses ; well ! here stands *mine*." He has, accordingly, produced a character, comparably only with that depicted by the great master himself, and far surpassing the conceptions of the Greek dramatists and Ovid, by all of whom Ulysses is degraded. Both in Shakespeare and Homer he is eminently wise ; but in the former he appears, as Dr. Johnson calls him, the *calm* Ulysses ; in the latter, ever active : the one is grave and cautious ; the other ready to embark in any adventure, in undoubting reliance on his readiness of expedient : the eloquence of the one is didactic, as becomes a speaker in a drama ; of the other, narrative, as suited to the epic ; the one is prescient, providing against difficulties ; the other κολυτροπος, certain to overcome them when they arrive. Shakespeare could not have written

> "The glorious tale to King Alcinous told,"

* Comus, v. 675, 6.

and he therefore did not attempt it. Homer, if he had made the attempt, could not have surpassed the wisdom and the poetry of such speeches as those in the third scene of the first act of *Troilus and Cressida;* such as "The specialty of rule hath been neglected;" in the third scene of the third act, "Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back;" or, indeed, throughout the whole play. It appears, I repeat, to be a studied antagonism; and, at all events, I think it would be far short of a miracle if Shakespeare had not read in some language the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—"the tale of Troy divine," as told by him who, alone of the uninspired sons of song, was his equal or superior.

4. "But whence have we the plot of *Timon*, except from the Greek of Lucian?" Farmer ridicules this fancy; and I do not know who ever asserted it. In the first place, it need not have been derived from the *Greek* of Lucian; for Erasmus had translated *Timon* into *Latin* many a year before Shakespeare was born. In the second place, those who have read the two Timons well know that, except in the one circumstance of Timon's being a misanthrope, who fled from society to the woods, and there found some gold while digging, there is nothing in common between them. As for the conception of the characters, they are distinct as the poles asunder. The misanthrope of Lucian is such as might be expected from the pen of a smart, sarcastic *littérateur*, occupied with the petty cares, and satirising the petty follies, of a small prating circle, cooped up in a literary town, reading over and over again the one set of poets, or philosophers, or orators; continually commentating, criticising, quibbling, jesting, wrangling, parodying, and never casting an eye beyond their own clique, the gossiping affairs of which they deemed of prime importance. Accordingly, the Greek Timon opens his imprecation to Jupiter with a beadroll of poetical epithets, and a sneer at the contrivances of metremongers; and

continues, in a strain of sarcasm directed as much against the mythological fables, in Lucian's day falling every where into disrepute, as against mankind. Much time is then spent in witty dialogues between Jupiter, Mercury, and Plutus, on the difficulty of acquiring or retaining wealth, and its unequal distribution, written in the manner of gay comedy. When Timon is again invested with riches, he fulminates a misanthropical decree against the human race; but his curses are little more than a somewhat extravagant *badinage*. His very first words betoken the author; they are parodies on the poets, things uppermost in the mind of the rhetorician, the lecturer, and the reviewer; but which certainly would not occur to the mind of a man stung to madness by his injuries — μελαγχολων των κακων, as he himself says, and rejoicing in the name of hater of man (και ὀνομα μεν ἐστω ὁ ΜΙΣΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ἡδιστου); though he tells us that he is to look upon men but as statues of stone or brass, which can not be objects of hatred. He is to feast by himself, to sacrifice by himself, to put the funeral crown upon himself after he is dead. These mere jocularities are cast in the appropriate form of a mock-decree. He is then visited by a trencher-friend, who had deserted him when he could keep no table; and an ungrateful fellow, whom he had assisted in affluence, and who neglected him in poverty. These, surely, are no uncommon cases; and they are treated in a sketchy, light, burlesque manner, probably with some real individuals in view. Then (for the constant objects of Lucianic satire must come at last) appear an orator, with a farcical decree; and a philosopher, with a parody on a philosophic lecture. These were the classes of mankind great in Lucian's eyes, and on them he always expends the utmost vigor of his satiric rage. Timon very properly kicks all these people out, and so ends the *petite comédie*.

It answered, I suppose, the purpose for which its author intended it. The priests were no doubt angry or amused; they

had a more dangerous and deadly foe at hand, in the resistless march of Christianity, to be seriously annoyed by mere squibs. The orators and philosophers, sketched under the names of Demeas and Thrasicles (the latter is evidently drawn from the life), and the real person (if any) who were intended by Gnathonides and Philiades, were in all probability as indignant on the appearance of the lively lampoon, and complained as bitterly of the licentiousness of libellous MSS., as the victims of witty newspapers or magazines in our own days inveigh against the licentiousness of a libellous press. The style is gay and sprightly; its observations, shrewd and pleasant; and the sketches, graphic and close to life. But what have they in common with the harrowing creation of the Shakespearian Timon? What are Lucian's angriest denunciations but childish trifling, compared with the curse upon Athens with which the fourth act of the English misanthrope opens?—the desperate prayer, that matrons should be unchaste, children disobedient, authority spurned, virginity turned to filth and shamelessness, poverty scoffed at, murder, theft, pillage, made the regular order of human conduct?

> —— "Maid, to thy master's bed;
> Thy mistress is o' the brothel!—son of sixteen,
> Pluck the lin'd crutch from the old limping sire;
> With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear,
> Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
> Domestic awe, night rest, and neighborhood,
> Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
> Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
> Decline to your confounding contraries,
> And yet confusion live!"

Shakespeare did not find any thing like this in jesting Lucian. Again, compare the Greek Timon's exclamation on finding the gold, with the parallel passage in Shakespeare, or contrast the visitors sent to each. I have already enumerated those of Lucian—triflers all. To the other Timon come the broken mili-

tary adventurer, at war with his country; and he is counselled to spare none — not age, sex, youth, infancy, holiness, wretchedness, all being equally infamous and detestable; and that task done, having made

> "Large confusion, and thy fury spent,
> Confounded be thyself!"

— the abandoned woman, strongly advised to ply her profligate trade so as to spread misery and disease; — the rascal thief, whose profession is justified on the ground that he is only doing openly what all the rest of mankind practises under seemly covers of hypocritical observance: —

> "The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power
> Have uncheck'd theft. Love not yourselves: away:
> Rob one another. There's more gold: Cut throats;
> All that you meet are thieves. To Athens, go,
> Break open shops, [for] nothing can you steal,
> But thieves do lose it. Steal not less, for this
> I give you; and gold confound you howsoever;
> Amen."

Shakespeare found all this in Lucian, just as much as he found it in another of Dr. Farmer's authorities, *Jack Drum's Entertainment*. There is no need for contrasting the characters any further. I am very much of opinion, from Farmer's suggesting the similarity at all, that whether Shakespeare was indebted to Lucian or not, the Doctor had never read the Greek dialogist — at least, with any thing like attention.

Such, then, detailed at length, with all its examples, is Dr. Farmer's argument to prove that Shakespeare was ignorant of Greek. Briefly summed up, the whole will amount to this: That some critics, especially Upton, have been over-zealous in tracing resemblances of passages or phrases in Greek to what we find in Shakespeare, which certainly is no fault of the "old bard;" that, in constructing his classical plays, instead of reading the Greek of Plutarch — of which there might, perhaps,

have been a hundred copies in England, during his life — he consulted the English translation of Sir Thomas North, who, having copied the blunders of Claude Amyot, was thereby the means of transferring a couple of trifling errors to *Julius Cæsar* and *Antony and Cleopatra;* that because an invisible poet, named Southern, had translated Ronsard, who had translated Anacreon, Shakespeare could not read even the Latin translation of the Teian odes; that because in the *Ship of Fooles* is to be found an incident referred to in the *Iliad*, and in the *Faërie Queene*, a description of the Nepenthe of the *Odyssey*, Shakespeare could not have known any thing of Homer; and, finally, that as Lucian had written a light comedy on Timon, those who supposed the deep tragedy on the same subject in English was dictated by the Greek, were very much mistaken. And this is the pamphlet which has, in the opinion of competent critics, "settled the question for ever!" It has settled one question for ever — that the mass of conceited ignorance among the reading public and the ordinary critical rabble of the middle of the last century was profusely abundant.

Having dismissed the details of the Greek question, I shall proceed to consider the *proofs* of Shakespeare's ignorance of other languages.

Part II.—"Small Latin."

I shall probably have somewhat more trouble with the *Latin* part of Dr. Farmer's *Essay* than with the *Greek*, not from any potency in the argument, or variety in the way of putting it, but from the confused and desultory manner in which his instances and examples are brought forward. In the edition I am using (Isaac Reed's, of 1813), where it occupies the first eighty-six pages of the second volume, the proofs to convict Shakespeare of ignorance commence at page 34, and are brought to a close with an exulting—"Thus much for the learning of Shakespeare, with respect to the ancient languages," at page 73; but these forty pages are far, indeed, from being devoted to the proposed theme. In them we find ample stores of miscellaneous information—such as that we may venture to look into the *Romaunt of the Rose*, "notwithstanding Master Prynne hath so positively assured us, on the word of John Gerson, that the author (Jehan de Mehun) is most certainly damned, if he did not care for a serious repentance:" that "poor Jehan had raised the expectations of a monastery in France, by the legacy of a great chest, and the weighty contents of it; but it proved to be filled with nothing but vetches;" on which the friars refused him Christian burial; that if "our zealous puritan [Prynne] had known of this, he would not have joined in the clamor against him:" that Sir Charles Hanbury Williams "literally stole [an epigram] from Angerianus, as he

appears in the *Deliciæ Ital. Poet.*, by Gruter, under the anagrammatic name of 'Ranutius Gherus,'" 1608, vol. i., p. 189 [which, it must be admitted, is at least as sounding a piece of learning as Upton's dimeter trochaic brachycatalectic, commonly called ithyphallic, which excites so much of Farmer's jocularity]: that "such biographers as Theophilus Cibber and the writer of the life of Sir Philip (Sydney) prefixed to the modern editions," are wrong in assigning the date of 1613 to the *Arcadia*, Dr. Farmer himself having actually a copy in his own possession, "printed for W. Ponsonbie, 1590, 4to, which had escaped the notice of the industrious Ames, and the rest of our typographical antiquaries:" that "Mr. Urry, probably misled by his predecessor, Speght," was wrong in being determined, Procrustes-like, to force every line in the *Canterbury Tales* to the same standard, the attention of our old poets being "directed to the *cæsural pause*, as the *grammarians* call it;" [Upton again!] that *Mr.* Menage quotes a canon upon us—"*Si quis dixerit episcopum* PODAGRA *laborare, anathema sit:*" that Skelton, in his rambling manner, gives a curious character of Wolsey, which is made a peg whereon to hang a note upon Skelton himself and his laureateship: that Mr. Garrick is "a *gentleman*, who will always be allowed the *first commentator* on Shakespeare, when he does not carry us beyond himself," which, to use the language of one of Lady Morgan's heroes, in —— (I forget what novel),* is "mighty nate:" that Mr. Ames, who searched after books of this sort with the utmost avidity, had not seen "the *two tomes*, which Tom Rawlinson would have called *justa volumina*," of W. Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, "when he published his *Typographical Antiquities*, as appears from his blunders about them; and possibly I myself [even I!] might have remained in the same predicament, had I not been favored with a copy by my most generous friend Dr. Lort:" that he

* "Florence Macarthy."—M.

"must correct a remark in the Life of Spenser, which is impotently levelled at the first critics of the age in the *Biographia Britannica*, followed by a dissertation on the date of Tasso's *Gierusalemme Liberata*, introduced chiefly to "assure the biographer," who assigns it to 1583, "that *I* have met with at least *six* other editions preceding his date of the first publication:" that Gabriel Harvey desired only to be "*epitaphed* the inventor of the English hexameter," and for a while every one would be halting on Roman feet: that the ridicule of our fellow-collegian, Hall, in one of his satires, and the reasoning of Daniel, in his *Defence of Rhyme* against Campion, presently reduced us to our original Gothic: that he had met with a facetious piece of Sir John Harrington, printed in 1596 (and possibly there was an earlier edition), called the *Metamorphoses of Ajax*: that "A Compendious or Brief Examination of Certayne Ordinary Complaints, &c., by William Shakespeare, gentleman," reprinted in 1751, was falsely attributed to our author; "*I* having at last met with the original edition," and with great ingenuity discovered that it was the composition of William Stafford: that "poor Antony"—he means Antony Wood—had too much reason for his character of Aubrey*—with an abundance of more stuff of the same kind, curious perhaps occasionally, and calculated to inspire us with due reverence for the biographical industry and acumen of Dr. Farmer, but having no more connection with the question, whether Shakespeare knew Latin or not, than it has with the quadrature of the circle. And even where we find points adduced which do bear upon that question, they are urged

* "It is therefore sufficiently clear, that poor Anthony had too much reason for his character of Aubrey. You will find it in his own account of his life, published by Hearne, which I would earnestly recommend to any hypochondriac:—

"'A pretender to antiquities, roving, magotie-headed, and sometimes little better than crased; and being exceedingly credulous, would stuff his many letters sent to A. W. with folliries and misformations.'"—P. 577.

in so rambling and discursive a manner, that it is scarcely possible to meet them without being tediously diffusive upon petty trifles.

His Latin task opens thus:—

"Perhaps the advocates for Shakespeare's knowledge of the Latin language may be more successful. Mr. Gildon takes the van. 'It is plain, that he was acquainted with the fables of antiquity very well: that some of the arrows of Cupid are pointed with lead, and others with gold, he found in Ovid; and what he speaks of Dido, in Virgil: nor do I know any translation of these poets so ancient as Shakespeare's time.' The passages on which these sagacious remarks are made occur in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and exhibit, we see, a clear proof of acquaintance with the Latin classics. But we are not answerable for Mr. Gildon's ignorance. He might have been told of Caxton and Douglas, of Surrey and Stanyhurst, of Phaer and Twyne, of Fleming and Golding, of Turberville and Churchyard! But these fables were easily known, without the help of either the originals or the translations. The fate of Dido had been sung very early by Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate; Marlowe had even already introduced her to the stage; and Cupid's arrows appear with their characteristic differences in Surrey, in Sidney, in Spencer, and every sonnetteer of the time. Nay, their very names were exhibited long before in *The Romaunt of the Rose*."

Farmer upsets here the argument of his pamphlet, when he says that we are not to be answerable for the ignorance of Gildon. Of course *we* are not; neither is *Shakespeare*. It may be true that Dr. Farmer had read more, and was better acquainted with literature in general, and particularly in its antiquarian departments, than Gildon. It would be strange, indeed, if the librarian of Cambridge,* living among books, and easy of for-

* I find I have made a mistake in saying, in the previous part of this paper, that Dr. Farmer, when he wrote his *Essay*, had the advantage of being able to consult a great library, in consequence of his being principal librarian of Cambridge. The *Essay* was published in 1766, and the Doctor was not appointed protobibliothecarius of the University until 1778. But he was always a library-haunter; and, of course, whether librarian or not, the literary stores of Cambridge were at his service. We are also told in the *Annual Necrology*, quoted by Nichols in the *History of Leicestershire*, vol. iv., p. 944,

tune, did not in such particulars surpass a poor hack-critic (Farmer, of course, does not forget to remind us of his "ill-starred rage" against Dennis*) writing for his bread, and picking information at the scantiest sources; but, I repeat, how can the literary distance between Gildon and Farmer affect Shakespeare?

A gentleman of the name of Charles Armitage Brown lately published a volume called Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems,† one chapter of which is dedicated to the question of his learning; and in this I find a fair remark upon the passage I have just extracted from Farmer's Essay: "His [Shakespeare's] frequent and appropriate use of the heathen mythology, and of the classical heroes, has been brought forward as evidence of his learning; but, as Dr. Farmer has shown, that knowledge might have been gained, as well as now, without Greek or Latin. Yet, had he displayed ignorance on these subjects, he might be proved somewhat unlearned." Unquestionably; and he must have been exposed to perpetual blundering, if he never drew elsewhere than at second-hand. Dr. Farmer has proved no more than that Shakespeare *might* have learned his Pagan lore from English authorities. Granted; but it is strange logic to argue that *therefore* he was incapable of learning it any where else. I do not know who taught the art of

that he had gathered by sixpenny purchases at bookstands "an immense number of books, good, bad, and indifferent." The catalogue of his library contains many curious articles.—W. M.

* After saying, in the text of his *Essay*, "one of the first and most vehement assertors of the learning of Shakespeare was the editor of his poems, the well-known Mr. Gildon," he adds in a note, "Hence, perhaps, the *ill-starred* rage between this critick and his elder brother, John Dennis, so pathetically lamented in the *Dunciad*." The verses referred to are:—

"Ah, Dennis! Gildon, ah! what ill-starred rage
Divides a friendship long confirmed by age?"—*Dunciad*, b. iii., v. 173–'4.

† Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems. Being his Sonnets clearly developed: with his Character, drawn chiefly from his Works. By Charles Armitage Brown. London, 1838. Bohn. 12mo., pp. 306.

syllogism at Cambridge in Dr. Farmer's time; but certainly neither "German Crouzaz nor Dutch Bursgersdyck"* could refrain from crying *negatur* to the *minor* which would lead to such a *conclusio.*

As the page or two following the sentences above taken from Mr. Brown has a direct reference to the question we are discussing, I continue the extract:—

"Accordingly, the annotators have brought forward no less than three examples of this ignorance, which, happily, at least two of them, prove nothing but the ignorance of his critics. The first is *Henry IV., Part II.*, where Hecuba's dream of a firebrand is called Althea's — a mistake certainly, but one which rather proves he was acquainted with both stories. Besides, Dr. Johnson, who notices it, ought to have remembered, as an editor, a line in *Henry VI., Part II.*, which Shakespeare, if he did not write it, must have well known, and which proves he was aware of the nature of Althea's brand:—

'As did the fatal brand Althea burned.'

"Henley brings forward the second example from *Macbeth*, thus annotating on the words 'Bellona's bridegroom:'—'This passage may be added to the many others, which show how little he knew of ancient mythology.' The many others!—where are they? In the mean time, why is Henley's classic lore offended? Is it because he had never heard, among the ancients, of Bellona's bridegroom? Alas! it was Macbeth himself the poet meant! Had he been termed, in his capacity of a soldier, a son of Mars, the liberty would have been as great; but, owing to the triteness of the appellation, not to be cavilled at as a proof of ignorance, though it would have made the doughty Thane of Glamis the brother of Cupid. What Shakespeare said, poetically said, was, that the warlike hero was worthy of being the bridegroom of the goddess of war. This is the passage:—

"'Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The Thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapped in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit.'

* Dunciad, b. iv., v. 198.

"Steevens gives us the third proof of ignorance, in these lines from the *Merchant of Venice*:—

> "'In such a night
> Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
> Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
> To come again to Carthage.'

'This passage,' quoth Steevens, in a matter-of-fact note, 'contains a small instance, out of many that might be brought, to prove that Shakespeare was no reader of the classics.' Out of many that might be brought! Why not bring them? And why was this brought? Purely because Virgil did not describe Dido *with a willow in her hand?* Steevens ought to have known, according to Virgil, that Dido was forsaken by her lover, and that the giving her the allegorical willow was nothing more nor less than a poetical description of her love-lorn state. As for the other instances, I have not found them—the 'many others,' and the 'many that might be brought.' These critics remind me of the drunken magistrate, who, seeing himself in a looking-glass at the moment he expected a criminal to be brought before him, cried out: 'Ah, thou caitiff! many a time and oft hast thou been brought before me!'"

On this I may observe—1. That the quotation from *Henry VI.* is decisive that Shakespeare *did* know the history of Althea's brand; but, if we refer to the passage in *Henry IV.*, we shall see that it was not by any means necessary that he should exhibit his learning there:—

> "*Bard.* Away, you whoreson upright rabbit, away!
> *Page.* Away, you rascally Althea's dream, away!
> *P. Hen.* Instruct us, boy: What dream, boy?
> *Page.* Marry, my lord, Althea dreamed she was delivered of a firebrand; and therefore I call him her dream."—Act II., sc. 2.

The prince is so much enraptured with this "good interpretation," that he gives the boy a crown as a reward. The blunder is evidently designed; and Shakespeare is as much answerable for the degree of mythological learning displayed by the page, as for the notions of grammatical propriety entertained by Mrs. Quickly. I think, however, that Mr. Brown is wrong in ascribing to Dr. Johnson any desire of bringing this sup-

posed error forward to sid the cause of proving Shakespeare unlearned.

2. That Henley's observations on Bellona's bridegroom are absurd, and Mr. Brown's comment is indisputably correct. Let me take, or make, this opportunity for saying, that Dr. Farmer informs us, "As for the play of *Macbeth* itself, it hath lately been suggested, from Mr. Guthrie's *Essay on English Tragedy*, that the *portrait* of Macbeth's *wife* is copied from Buchanan, whose spirit, as well as words, is translated into the play of Shakespeare; and it had signified nothing to have pored only on Holinshed for *facts*." Farmer very truly remarks that there is nothing in Buchanan to justify this assertion: "'Animus etiam, præ se ferox, prope quotidianis conviciis uxoris (quæ omnium consiliorum ei erat conscia) stimulabatur.' This is the whole that Buchanan says of the *lady*." Shakespeare undoubtedly took the story from Holinshed, who had abridged it from Bellenden's translation of *The Noble Clerk, Hector Boece*, as Farmer is able to prove by the salutation of the witches being given in the tragedy, not as in Buchanan, but as it appears in Holinshed, after Bellenden, who followed Boetius.* Yet, if we could suppose that Shakespeare looked beyond the English version, we might discover an authority for mending some halting lines in the play, which have occupied its critics; as, for example:—

"Where the place?
Upon the heath,
There to meet with Macbeth."

* "We can demonstrate that Shakespeare had not the story from Buchanan. According to him, the weird sisters salute Macbeth, 'Una Angusiæ Thanum, altera Moraviæ, tertia *regem*,' Thane of Angus, and of Murray, &c.; but according to Holinshed, immediately from Bellenden, as it stands in Shakespeare, "The first of them spake and sayde, 'All hayle, Makbeth, thane of Glammis:' the second of them said, 'Hayle, Makbeth, thane of Cawdor;' but the third said, 'All hayle, Makbeth, that hereafter shall be King of Scotland.'"—P. 243.

"1 *Witch*. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
2 *Witch*. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!
3 *Witch*. All hail, Macbeth! that shall be king hereafter."

Now, this lame line should be what Upton would call a trochaic dimeter catalectic, and not brachycatalectic; and, accordingly, Pope—not, indeed, consulting the learned labors of the prosodian, but his own ear—altered it to—

"*There I go to meet Macbeth.*"

And Capell proposes—

"*There to meet with brave Macbeth.*"

And again:—

"Dismayed not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
Yes."

Steevens remarks that some word, necessary to complete the verse, has been omitted in the old copy; and Sir Thomas Hanmer proposes, "Our captains, *brave* Macbeth," &c. If the word were allowed to be pronounced as a trisyllable, it would suit the metre in the above-quoted lines, and elsewhere:—

"There to meet with *Mac-a-beth.*"

"Our captains, *Mac-a-beth* and Banquo?
Yes."

In Holinshed the word is *Makbeth;* but Fordun, his remote authority, as being the authority of Hector Boethius, calls him *Machabeus sive Machabeda.* In Steevens's notes will be found a passage, extracted from the *Scoto Chronicon,* in which the latter spelling occurs: "Subito namque post mortem *Machabedæ,* convenerunt quidam ex ejus parentela," &c. I do not insist on this trifle, to maintain that Shakespeare made the *Scoto Chronicon* his study—I should, indeed, be very much astonished if he had; but it is as strong an evidence of his having done so, as any of Farmer's can be allowed to be proofs that he had not consulted any authors but those which were to be found in English.

But if I care little for the learning or the logic of Dr. Farmer, I own I care less for such criticism as that of Mr. Guthrie. I

have never seen his *Essay on English Tragedy*, and assuredly shall not look for it, being quite satisfied as to the ability and discrimination of the critic who discovers that Shakespeare copied the portrait of Lady Macbeth from Buchanan or any one else. There certainly is something graphic in the sentence above quoted from the poetic historian, describing in few words the naturally ferocious mind of Macbeth, spurred on by the fierce reproaches which his wife, intimately conscious of all his designs, urged against him almost day by day; but the conception of such a character, though less prosaic than that in Holinshed, who tells us that she "lay sore upon her husband, to attempt the thing, as she that was very ambitious, brenning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of queene," is lower ten thousand fathoms deep than that of the Lady Macbeth of Shakespeare. *She* is, in truth, the stimulated, not the stimulator; the follower, not the leader, of her husband's designs; sacrificing her feelings and affections, unsexing herself, to promote his cherished ambition; hoping that his first crime was to be the last; frightened and broken-hearted, when she finds him determined on wading remorsely through murder; submitting in terrified silence to his sanguinary projects; clinging to him, in desperate fidelity, during his ruined fortunes, and his detested career, and inspiring even his bloody nature with its last human feeling; shielding her remorse from human eye as long as she has power to conceal her thoughts, but manifesting it in bitter agony when diseased sleep deprives her of control over her movements; and finally dying, amid the wail of women, at the moment when Fate had unrelentingly determined that her husband should perish amid accumulated horrors. If this lady is found by Guthrie portrayed in Buchanan, then, great as were the talents of him

"whose honored bones
Are laid 'neath old Greyfriars' stones"*—

* George Buchanan is buried in the Greyfriars' Church, in Edinburgh.

I can only say that *he* never found any thing like such power of portraiture or poetry in himself. The story of *Macbeth* might have been suggested by the classical Latin of Buchanan, or the homely English of Holinshed; but Lady Macbeth was suggested by an inspiration not derived from annalist or historian.

3. That the *willow* of Dido is properly explained by Mr. Brown. Steevens's note is stark nonsense. In Virgil, Dido is described as endeavoring to persuade Æneas to return to her, after the canvass had invoked the breeze:—

"Puppibus et læti nautæ imposuere coronas."

It would be idle to quote at length the story of Dido's sorrows, which every body has by heart; it is enough to say that the lines spoken by Lorenzo, in the *Merchant of Venice*, are no more than a picturesque condensation of what we find in Virgil (*Æn.*, iv., 296–590), as descriptive of the struggles of Dido to retain her faithless lover—her wo when she saw his preparations for departure on the wild sea-bank—

"Toto properari littore circum
Undique convenere," &c.,—

and her endeavors, through Anna (as the willow of her hand), to wave him back to Carthage. Mr. Brown, however, is mistaken, if he thinks that no more than the three passages which he has here selected, as specimens of impertinent airs of superiority in learning over Shakespeare, are all that can be found in Steevens, and other commentators of similar grade. I could, without exaggeration, produce a hundred other impertinences equally flagrant; but I must get on for the present with Dr. Farmer.

Whalley observes that when, in the *Tempest*, it is said—

"High queen of state,
Great Juno comes; I know her by her *gait*"—

the allusion is to the *divûm incedo regina* of Virgil. Bishop Warburton thinks that, in the *Merchant of Venice*, the oath,

"*by two-headed Janus*," shows Shakespeare's knowledge of the antique; "and, quoth Dr. Sewell, Shakespeare hath somewhere a Latin motto" (which, by-the-way, is a very dishonest manner of quoting): are not these some proofs of Shakespeare's knowledge? "No," says Dr. Farmer, "they are not; *because* Taylor, the *water-poet*, alludes to Juno's port and majesty, and the double face of Janus; and has, besides, a Latin motto, and a whole poem upon it into the bargain."

"You perceive, my dear sir," continues Farmer, "how vague and indeterminate such arguments must be; for, in fact, this sweet swan of Thames, as Mr. Pope calls him, hath more scraps of Latin, and allusions to antiquity, than are any where to be met with in the writings of Shakespeare. I am sorry to trouble you with trifles, yet what must be done when grave men insist upon them?"

What must be done, indeed, when we find that a grave man insists upon it that the confessedly casual acquaintance at second-hand* with the classical mythology displayed by Taylor should be a proof that the knowledge of Shakespeare, or of any body else, is necessarily of the same description? Burns made no pretension to an acquaintance with Greek or Latin, and yet we can find abundance of allusions to the heathen gods and goddesses in his poems. Is that a reason for believing, because we have the same allusions in Lord Byron, that his lordship had no means of consulting the originals in which those deities are native?

This I should say in any case, but there is a peculiar dishon-

* Taylor tells us that when he got from *possum* to *posset*, he could not get any further. This must be intended as a piece of wit; for if he got as far as *possum* at all, he must have passed through *sum* and its inflections; and there is no more difficulty in proceeding from *posset* to *possemus*, than from *esset* to *essemus*, and so forth. The *posset* of Taylor is, I suspect, a sack-*posset*. He forsook the grammar in which he found the *possum*, for the bowl in which he found the *posset*. — W. M.

esty in the reference of Farmer's *Essay* (dishonesty of one kind or other is, indeed, its characteristic throughout) to Warburton's note on "two-headed Janus." In the *Merchant of Venice*, Act I., sc. 1, Salanio (as the name of the character is commonly spelt) says, jesting upon Antonio's unexplainable sadness, that they might

> "Say you are sad,
> Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
> For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
> Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
> Nature hath formed strange fellows in her time" —

some, in short, that will laugh, and others that will weep, without any assignable cause. On which Warburton remarks:—

"Here Shakespeare shows his knowledge in the antique. By two-headed Janus is meant those antique, bifrontine heads, which generally represent a young and smiling face, together with an old and wrinkled one, being of Pan and Bacchus, of Saturn and Apollo, &c. These are not uncommon in collections of antiques; and in the books of the antiquaries, as Montfauçon, Spanheim, &c."

I do not know that there was much learning requisite to discover this; but the illustration of Bishop Warburton is elegant, and, to all appearance, just. The mere double face in the Water-poet is what may occur to any looker upon a picture of Janus; but the fair aspect of the beauteous Apollo on one side, while the other exhibits the wrinkled visage of Saturn, suggests a poetical type of a man melancholy and gay by turns, for no other reason save the pleasure of the maker who "formed so strange a fellow."

When Dodd refers *Rumor painted full of tongues* to the description of Fame in Ovid or Virgil, we are reminded that she has been represented by Stephen Hawes in his *Pastyme of Pleasure*, as —

> "A goodly lady envyroned about
> With *tongues* of fire;" —

that something of the same kind is to be found in Sir Thomas More's *Pageants;* in her elaborate portrait by Chaucer in the *Book of Fame;* and in John Higgins's *Legend of King Albanacte.* I do not think it was necessary that Shakespeare should have read Virgil or Ovid, Hawes or Higgins, More or Chaucer, to borrow from them so obvious an idea as that of bedecking the representative of Rumor in a garment painted with tongues; which was, indeed, his ordinary attire, as in the pageant of Henry VIII., described by Holinshed, and of James I., described by Decker (see the notes of Warton and Steevens on the Induction of the *Second Part of Henry IV.*). Dodd's learning, therefore, was misplaced; but it proves nothing against the learning of Shakespeare. Rabelais (*Pantagruel*, lib. v., cap. 31) furnishes a somewhat analogous person to Rumor; namely, *Ouïdire*, with an innumerable quantity of ears,* as well as tongues. A critic like Dr. Dodd might suggest that this too was borrowed from the Fame of Virgil:—

"Cui, quot sunt corpore plumæ,
* * * * * *
Tot linguæ, totidem ora sonant, *tot subrigit aures.*"
Æn., iv., 181–'3.

And if a critic like Farmer found any thing of the same kind in a French poet, of or before the times of the far-famed romance of Gargantua and Pantagruel, even in Rominagrobis himself, he might, in perfect consistency with the argument of this "celebrated *Essay*," maintain that the humorist did not find his prototype in Latin, but in French; and, *therefore*, because the

* In the chapter, *Comment au pays de Satin nous veismes Ouïdire tenant eschole de tesmoignerie:* "Sans plus sejourner nous transportâmes on lieu ou cestoit, et veismes ung petit viellard bossu, contrefaict et monstreux, on le nomme Ouïdire: il avoit la gueule fenduë jusques aulx aureilles, dedans la gueule sept langues, et chasque langue fenduë en sept parties: quoyque ce feust, de toutes sept ensemblement parloit divers propos, et languiges divers: avoit aussi parmy la teste, et le reste du corps aultant d'aureilles comme jadis eut Argus d'yeulx."—W. M.

former critic was mistaken, that Rabelais was incapable of reading Virgil. The same observation applies to Farmer's reply to a remark made by the author of *The Beauties of Poetry*, who says that he "can not but wonder that a poet, whose classical images are composed of the finest parts, and breathe the very spirit of ancient mythology, should pass for being illiterate:—

> "'See what a grace was seated on his brow!
> Hyperion's curls:* the front of Jove himself:
> An eye like Mars to threaten and command:
> A station like the herald Mercury,
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.'" — *Hamlet.*

"Illiterate," says Farmer, "is an ambiguous term: the question is, whether poetic history would be only known by an adept in languages." It certainly can, though by no means so easily in the time of Queen Elizabeth as in ours, when English literature alone will supply as much of such history as can be obtained by the most diligent reader of the Greek and Roman poets. Farmer refers us to Stephen Bateman's *Golden Booke of the Leaden Gods*, 1577, and several other laborious compilations on the subject; and adds that "all this, and much more mythology, might as perfectly have been learned from the *Testament of Creseide* and the *Faërie Queene* as from a regular Pantheon, or Polymates himself." This is true enough (though I certainly do not believe that Shakespeare ever read a line of Bateman's work, which might more appropriately be styled the Leaden Book of the Golden Gods); but even the *Faërie Queene* could not supply any picture so truly imbued with a classical taste, and breathing the very style and manner of the classics, as the passage from *Hamlet*. Compare it with Phaer's

* Farmer remarks that Hyperion is used with the same error in quantity by Spenser. It would be a piece of mere affectation to pronounce the word otherwise in *English;* and even in Greek the *iota* is lengthened only through the necessity of the hexameter in which it could not otherwise have a place. The iota of τῶν is short. — W. M.

version of Virgil, quoted by Malone; and it will be seen that Shakespeare, who appears to have had in his mind Mercury's descent upon Mount Atlas, in the fourth *Æneid*, has seized the spirit of the Roman poet better than his translator:—

"And now approaching neere, the top he seeth and mighty lims
Of Atlas mountain tough, that heaven on boyst'rous shoulders beares.
There first on ground with wings of might doth Mercury arrive;
Then down from thence, right over seas, himselfe doth headlong drive."

The original is:—

"Jamque volans apicem et latera ardua cernit
Atlantis duri, cœlum qui vertice fulcit.
* * * * *
Hic primum, paribus nitens Cyllenius alis,
Constitit."—*Æneid*, iv., 246, 253.

"*Paribus alis*" are not "wings of might," as Phaer translates them; on the contrary, the wings of Mercury are the lightest in the whole plumage of mythology; easy, as Horne Tooke makes Sir Francis Burdett say,* to be taken off, and not, like those of other winged deities, making part of his body. Nor does "then first on ground doth Mercury arrive" convey the idea expressed in "*constitit.*" The airy and musical metre of *Hamlet* brings before us no heavy-winged god; and Shakespeare, by his peculiar use of the word *station*, gives us the very phraseology of Virgil, exhibiting, as in a picture or statue, the light but vigorous figure of Mercury, newly descended from heaven, and *standing* in the full-developed grace of his celestial

* Diversions of Purley. Part I., ch. i., in Richard Taylor's edition of 1829, vol. i., p. 26. "These are the artificial wings of Mercury, by means of which the Argus eyes of philosophy have been cheated.

"'*H.* It is my meaning.

"'*B.* Well. We can only judge of your opinion after we have heard how you maintain it. Proceed, and strip him of his wings. They seem easy enough to be taken off; for it strikes me now, after what you have said, that they are indeed put on in a peculiar manner, and do not, like those of other winged deities, make a part of his body. You have only to loose the strings from his feet, and take off his cap.'"

form as the herald of the gods, not *arriving*, as per coach or train, on the summit of a heaven-kissing hill. I think it more probable that Shakespeare had his images directly from Virgil, not from Phaer; and if he substituted the picturesque word, "heaven-kissing hill," for the harsher description of rough and aged Atlas, in the *Æneid*, it is because, in speaking of his father, Hamlet did not choose to use any other expressions than those of majesty, elegance, and beauty.

I own that I am growing weary, and I fear that the same feeling extends to my readers, if any have had patience to get so far, of this peddling work. I shall not, therefore, meddle with Dr. Farmer's correction of Upton, for altering hangman to "henchman — a page, *pusio*," in what Don Pedro says of Benedick* [not Benedict, as Farmer by an ordinary mistake calls him]: nor with his discovery that Shakespeare might have been indebted for

* "In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Don Pedro says of the insensible Benedict, 'He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little *hangman* dare not shoot at him.'

"This mythology is not recollected in the ancients, and therefore the critic hath no doubt but his author wrote '*Henchman — a page, pusio:* and *this* word seeming too hard for the printer, he translated the little urchin into a *hangman*, a character no way belonging to him.'

"But this character was not borrowed from the ancients, it came from the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sydney:—

> "'Millions of years this old drivell, Cupid, lives;
> While still more wretch, more wicked he doth prove;
> Till now at length that Jove an office gives
> (At Juno's suite who much did Argus love),
> In this our world a *hangman* for to be
> Of all those fooles that will have all they see.'"—B. ii., c. 14.

So far Farmer. I quote the passage from Sir Philip, chiefly for the benefit of those who delight in nicknaming Lord Palmerston, Cupid, and alluding to his perennial tenacity to office. It may serve also to describe the vigor of his government, as well as the improvement made in his administration by length of time; while some of his actions would seem to indicate that he is qualifying for the last office here assigned to Cupid.—W. M.

"Most sure the goddess
On whom those airs attend"*

to Stanyhurst's translation. "No doubt a godesse," as well as to the original, "*O dea, certe:*" nor with his now superseded black-letter reading of the *Historie of Hamblet*, by which he overthrows the sage suspicions of Dr. Grey and Mr. Whalley, that Shakespeare *must* have read *Saxo Grammaticus* in the original Latin, "as no translation had been made into any modern language:" nor with his controversy with George Colman the elder, and Bonnell Thornton, as to whether the disguise of the Pedant, in the *Taming of the Shrew*, was taken from that of the Sycophanta, in the *Trinummus*, or on Shakespeare's other obligations to Plautus and Terence—nor with his proof that the translations of some of Ovid's *Epistles*, which were attributed to Shakespeare, and considered (I know not by whom) to be the sheet-anchor by which his reputation for learning is to hold fast, were in reality the work of Thomas Heywood—I shall do myself the pleasure of passing by all these wonderful things, leaving them without comment to the judgment of the reader. I shall only notice the following points, and that as briefly as I can:—

I. In the prologue of *Troilus and Cressida*, the six gates of Troy are called, in the folio—

"Dardan and Tymbria, Ilias, Chetas, Trojan,
And Antenonydus."

Theobald alters these to—

"Dardan and Thymbria, Ilia, Scæa, Trojan,
And Antenorides,"

after Dares Phrygius, cap. iv.: "Ilio portas fecit quorum nomina hæc sunt, Antenoridæ, Dardaniæ, Iliæ, Scææ, Thymbrææ, Trojanæ;" but Farmer refers to the *Troy Boke* of Lydgate,

* *Tempest.*—Act I., sc. 2.

where they are called Dardanydes, Tymbria, Helyas, Cetheas, Trojana, Anthonydes. In late editions, they appear as—

> "Dardan and Tymbria, Ilias, Chetas, Trojan,
> And Antenorides."

Agreeing with Dr. Farmer, that Shakespeare found them in Lydgate, not in Dares, I should prefer reading *Cetheas* for *Chetas*, and *Anthonydes* (which is not very far from the folio reading, *Antenonydus*) for *Antenorides*—for that would be more consonant with Shakespeare's usual method of exactly transcribing his originals. But I do not agree with the Doctor, that Theobald's having supposed it necessary that Shakespeare should have read Dares, is of any value in an argument to prove the poet destitute of learning. It merely proves that, in this instance at least, Theobald was destitute of sense. I have already expressed my opinion, that the play of *Troilus and Cressida* was written as a sort of trial of strength with Homer in the art of delineating character; and, at all events, Shakespeare must have known enough of Homer to be aware that there is nothing about Cressida, or Troilus's love for her, in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. If he had ever troubled himself about Dares, he would have found that he was a gentleman of great credibility. "Dares Phrygius, qui hanc historiam scripsit, ait se militasse usque dum Troja capta est; hos se vidisse quum induciæ essent, partim prœlio interfuisse."—*Cap.* xii. Madame Dacier, who edited the book, is quite in a passion with him, and scolds with all the energy of a Frenchwoman: "Et hoc" (the mention of a Dares by Ptolemæus Hephæstion, who tells us that he (Dares) was μνήμονα Ἕκτορος—the adviser of Hector not to kill Patroclus, and also by Ælian) "illud est quod homini nugaci et inepto consilium fecit, ut sub illius Daretis nomine, qui nusquam comparabat, libellum illum quem hodie habemus, in lucem mitteret, fingens illum à Cornelio Nepote Latine translatum." His story

was, however, a great favorite in the Middle Ages, when Homer was scarcely known to the western world; and it came to Lydgate through the medium of Guido Colonna. Now as Shakespeare, without having the learning of *doctissima Domina Dacieria*, must have considered the story of Troy, as told by Lydgate after Colonna, and by Colonna after Dares the Phrygian, who actually made the Trojan campaigns under the command of Hector, to whose staff he was attached, to be nothing better than the work of a *homo nugax et ineptus*, it could not have occurred to him that it was at all necessary he should correct Lydgate by the sham Cornelius Nepos, even if copies of Dares Phrygius had in his time been as plenty as blackberries, especially as he might easily have discovered that these six gates are wholly apocryphal; two only of the six, the Dardan and the Scæan, being mentioned by Homer — of course, the orthodox authority — and these two being in fact but one. For the Tymbrian, Ilian, Trojan, and Antenoridan, we are indebted to the ocular testimony of the mnemon of Hector.

II. The famous speech of Claudio, in *Measure for Measure*, Act III., sc. 1:—

> "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where —
> To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the delighted* spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendant world"——

is generally considered as derived from Virgil's description of the Platonic hell:—

* The *delighted* spirit. This word puzzles the commentators. Warburton's explanation, viz., "the spirit accustomed here to ease and delights," is rather strained. Johnson proposes *benighted*; Therlby, *delinquent*; Hanmer, *dilated*. Perhaps we might read *delated*, *i. e.*, informed against.—W. M.

> "Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
> Supplicia expendunt. Aliæ penduntur inanes,
> Suspensæ, ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto
> Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni"—(*Æn.* vi., 739–'42),

and the similarity is no doubt so striking as to justify that opinion. I must transcribe Farmer's remarks, in opposition:—

"Most certainly the ideas of 'a spirit bathing in fiery floods,' of residing 'in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice,' or of being 'imprisoned in the viewless winds,' are not original in our author; but I am not sure that they came from the *Platonick* hell of Virgil. The monks also had their hot and their cold hell. 'The fyrste is fyre that ever brenneth, and never gyveth lighte,' says an old homily; 'the seconde is passyng colde, that yf a grete hylle of fyre were casten therein, it sholde torn to yce.' One of their legends, well remembered in the time of Shakespeare, gives us a dialogue between a bishop and a soul tormented in a piece of ice, which was brought to cure a *grete brenning* heate in his foot: take care you do not interpret this the gout—for I remember Mr. Menage quotes a *canon* upon us:—

> "'Si quis dixerit episcopum PODAGRA laborare, anathema sit.'

Another tells us of the soul of a monk fastened to a rock, which the winds were to blow about for a twelvemonth, and purge of its enormities. Indeed, this doctrine was before now introduced into poetick fiction, as you may see in a poem 'where the lover declareth his pains to exceed far the pains of hell,' among the many miscellaneous ones subjoined to the works of Surrey. Nay, a very learned and inquisitive brother-antiquary, our Greek professor, hath observed to me, on the authority of Blefkenius, that this was the ancient opinion of the inhabitants of Iceland, who were certainly very little read either in the *poet* or the *philosopher*.

"After all, Shakespeare's curiosity might lead him to *translations*. Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonick hell into the 'punytion of saulis in purgatory;' and it is observable, that when the ghost informs Hamlet of his doom there—

> "'"'Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature
> Are *burnt and purged away*'—

the expression is very similar to the bishop's. I will give you his version as concisely as I can. 'It is a nedeful thyng to suffer panis and torment; sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire uthir sum,—thus the mony vices

"'Contrakkit in the corpis be *done away*
And purgit.'"—*Sixte Booke of Eneados*,* fol., p. 191.

Does any one imagine that Shakespeare set himself to grub in quest of this monastic lore, or studied the Icelandic labors of Blefkenius? Those critics are laughed at who imagine that he had read *Saxo Grammaticus* to learn the particulars of the story of Hamlet; and yet they are more rational than the Doctor, who laughs at them: for the history, no matter through what channels it reached Shakespeare, *is* to be traced originally, and almost exclusively, to the Danish historian, while notions and fancies of infernal tortures are diffused throughout all ages and countries. When Claudio, in this speech, expresses his apprehension that it may be his fate after death

"to be worse than worst
"Of those *that lawless and uncertain thoughts*
Imagine howling,"

Dr. Johnson finely interprets the words in Italics, to mean "conjecture sent out to wander, without any certain direction, and ranging through possibilities of pain." In this melancholy wandering, the conjecture of the Saga-singing scald, or the legend-manufacturing monk, could not in its material attributes differ widely from the fictions of the poet, or the speculations of the philosopher. All, equally men, had but the same sources, physical or spiritual, to draw upon for images of sorrow and suffering. That Milton, when he dooms his fallen angels to

* This, however, is not the version of the passage in Virgil to which it is supposed Shakespeare is indebted. I subjoin that part of Douglas:—

"Sum stentit bene in wisnand wyndis wake,
Of some the cryme committed clengit be
Vnder the watter, or the hidduous se;
And in the fyre the gilt of other sum
Is purifyit and clengit al and sum
Ilkane of vs his ganand purgatory
Mon suffir."—P. 191.

I quote from the same edition as Dr. Farmer. Edin., 1710.—W. M.

"feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice," &c.—(*P. L.*, b. ii., 598, &c.),

remembered this speech of Claudio, is plain from the slightest comparison of the passages; but it can not be doubted that to one so deeply and variously read in theology, in all its departments (and in what branch of literature was not Milton deeply and variously read?)—the legendary hell of the monks, and the infernal mythology of the Scandinavian, as related by Blefkenius, and all other accessible authorities of the time, were perfectly familiar. We may also be certain that he did not stop at the monks; but was well acquainted with the more ancient ecclesiastical authorities — as St. Jerome.* On the other hand, to suppose that Shakespeare, with Virgil before him, preferred consulting the *Legenda Aurea*, or *Blefkenius de Islandia*, of which, in all probability, he had never heard, is a supposition of most preposterous pedantry. He found his "Most sure the goddess," &c., in Stanyhurst's *Æneid*—his purgatory, in Gavin Douglas's *Æneid;* and Malone sends him to find his picture of Mercury in Phaer's *Æneid*. Might we not ask, Is it impossible that mere curiosity might have led him to look into Virgil's *Æneid?*

III. Ovid, also, he must have known only in translation, for the following reasons:—

"Prospero, in *The Tempest*, begins the address to his attendant *spirits*—

"'Ye elves of hills, of standing lakes, and groves.'"

* St. Jerome on Job, xxiv. 19 (rendered in his Vulgate "ad nimium calorem transeat ab acquis nivium"), has "quasi duas Gehennas sanctus Job dicere mihi videtur, ignis et frigoris, per quas diabolus hæreticus, et homo impius commutetur. Forte in ipsa Gehenna talis sensuum cruciatus fiet illis, qui in ea torquebuntur, ut nunc quasi ignem ardentem sentiant, nunc nimium algoris inceneium; et pœnalis commutatio sit, nunc frigus sentientibus, nunc calorem."—W. M.

This speech, Dr. Warburton rightly observes to be borrowed from Medea in Ovid: and "it proves," says Mr. Holt, "beyond contradiction, that Shakespeare was perfectly acquainted with the sentiments of the ancients on the subject of enchantments." The original lines are these:—

"'Auræque, et venti, montesque, amnesque, lacusque,
Diique omnes nemorum, diique omnes noctis adeste.
[Quorum ope, cum volui, ripis mirantibus, amnes
In fontes rediere suos; concussaque sisto,
Stantia concutio cantu freta; nubila pello;
Nubilaque induco: ventos abigoque vocoque.
Vipereas rumpo verbis et carmine fauces:
Vivaque saxa, sua convulsaque robora terra.
Et silvas moveo, jubeoque tremiscere montes;
Et mugire solum, manesque exire sepulcris.
Te quoque, Luna, traho, quanvis Temesæa labores
Æra tuos minuant. Currus quoque carmine nostro
Pallet avi, pallet nostris Aurora venenis.']

Metam., vii. 197–209.

"It happens, however, that the translation by Arthur Golding is by no means literal, and Shakespeare has closely followed it:—

"'Ye ayres and windes, ye elves of hills, of brookes and woods alone,
Of standing lakes, and of the night, approche ye everychone;
[Through helpe of whom (the crooked bankes much wondering at the thing)
I have compelled streames to run cleane backward to their spring.
By charmes I make the calme seas rough, and make the rough seas playne;
And cover all the skie with cloudes, and chase them thence againe.
By charmes I raise and lay the windes, and burst the viper's jaw;
And from the bowels of the earth both stones and trees do draw.
Whole woods and forests I remove — I make the mountains shake;
And even the earth itself to groane, and fearfully to quake.
I call up dead men from their graves; and thee, O lightsome moone,
I darken oft, though beaten brass abate thy peril soon:
Our sorcerie dims the morning fair, and darks the sun at noone,' &c.]

Fol. 81."

Dr. Farmer has not supplied those parts of the quotations which I have enclosed in brackets; but I have put them together, for further comparison. Mr. Holt, whose very title

page * proves him to have been a very silly person, which character every succeeding page of his *Attempt* amply sustains, could scarcely have read the passages of Shakespeare and Ovid together, when he said that the former was proved to be perfectly acquainted with the sentiments of the ancients, so far as close following of the Latin poet in this speech of Prospero affords such proof. It shows, however, that Shakespeare was perfectly acquainted with the difference between the enchantments of the ancients, and those which were suitable to the character of his Prospero. Golding, indeed, mistook his author, when he translated

> "Montesque, amnesque, lacusque,
> Dîque omnes nemorum, dîque omnes noctis adeste,"

by "ye *elves* of hills, of brooks, and woods *alone*, of standing lakes, and of the night;" for the deities invoked by Medea were any thing but what, in our language, attaches to the idea of *elves;* while the epithet *alone*, though perhaps defensible, is introduced without sufficient warrant into the translation, and does not convey the exact thought intended by Ovid's "*Dîque omnes nemorum.*" But what was unsuitable for Ovid, was perfectly suitable for Shakespeare; and, accordingly, he had no scruple of borrowing a few words of romantic appeal to the tiny deities of fairy superstition. The lines immediately following, "Ye ayres, and winds," &c., address the powers which, with printless foot, dance upon the sands; which, by moonshine, from the green, sour ringlets, not touched by the ewe, which make midnight mushrooms for pastime, which rejoice to hear the solemn curfew; and not one of these things is connected with the notions of aërial habitants of wood or stream in classical days. When Shakespeare returns to Ovid, he is very

* An Attempt to rescue that aunciente English Poet and Playwright, Maister Williaume Shakespeare, from the Errours faulsely charged upon him by certain new-fangled Wits. London, 1749. 8vo.—W. M.

little indebted to Golding. We find, indeed, in the *Tempest*, that Prospero boasts of having "bedimmed the noontide sun," which resembles Golding's

"Our sorcerie *dims* the morning fair, and darks the *sun at noone.*"

But the analogous passage in Ovid would have been, in its literal state, of no use to Prospero,—

"Currus quoque carmine nostro
Pallet *avi.*"

With this obligation, however, the compliment due to Golding ceases. *Ope quorum.* "Through *help* of whom." *Golding.* "By whose *aid.*" *Shakespeare.* *Vivaque saxa, sua convulsaque robora terra, et silvas moveo.* "And from the bowels of the earth, both stone and *trees* do *draw.*" *Golding.* "Rifted Jove's stout *oak* (robora) with his own bolt; and by the spurs *plucked up* (sua convulsa terra), the pine and cedar." *Shakespeare.* *Manesque exire sepulcris.* "I call up dead men from their graves." *Golding.* "Graves, at my command, have waked their sleepers; oped, and let them forth." *Shakespeare.* Ovid has contributed to the invocation of Prospero, at least as much as Golding.

IV. Warburton imagined that the word *suggestion*, in Queen Catherine's character of Wolsey in *Henry VIII.*, "is used with great propriety and seeming knowledge of the Latin tongue; and he proceeds to settle the sense of it from the late Roman writers, and their glossers." The passage is this:—

"He was a man
Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
Himself with princes; one that by suggestion
Ty'd all the kingdom. Simony was fair play;
His own opinion was his law. I' the presence,
He would say untruths; and he ever double,
Both in his words and meaning. He was never.
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful:

His promises were, as he then was, mighty;
But his performance as he is now, nothing.
Of his own body he was ill, and gave
The clergy ill example."

Warburton's interpretation of the word from the Roman writers and their glossers is "Suggestio est, cum magistratus quilibet principi salubre consilium suggerit;" which, however, is not exactly Shakespeare's meaning. He had it, as Farmer truly says, from Holinshed:—

"This cardinal was a great stomach, for he compted himself equal with princes, and craftie *suggestion* got into his hands innumerable treasure: he forced little on simonie; and was not pitiful, and stood affectionate in his own opinion: in open presence he would lie and seie untruth, and was double both in speech and meaning: he would promise much and performe little: he was vicious of his bodie, and gave the clergie evil example."—*Edit.* 1587, p. 922.

Warburton was here, as frequently, too learned, and looked further then his author, who looked only to Holinshed. Nor is the word used either in dramatist or historian precisely in the Roman sense. *Suggestion* is purely a legal phrase, to signify an information, somewhat of the same nature as *ex officio* informations of the present day. It appears to be as ancient as the common law itself; but it was so extended by the statutes of the 3d and 7th Henry VII., as to supersede the legal and orderly jurisdiction of the King's Bench. The word is, indeed, originally derived from the gloss quoted by Warburton; but the *utile consilium*, which was *suggested* to the prince, became in practice, under the Tudors, a mere instrument to extort money. The more obnoxious statute of Henry VII. was repealed in the first year of Henry VIII., and Wolsey was more cautious than his predecessors. Holinshed therefore calls his suggestion "craftie;" but all through the play, as well as in contemporary act, will be found loud complaints of the extorsions by which he amassed "innumerable treasure." As I

am not writing the history of England, or the times of Henry VIII., I only refer to the ordinary authority; adding that, of the legal meaning of the word, *suggestion*, Dr. Farmer or the commentators say nothing. Tollet talks of there being such a thing as suggestion to the king *or pope*, which would trench on treason: and Johnson, in the *Dictionary*, does not give the law explanation of the word. Whatever may have been the *seeming* knowledge of Shakespeare in Latin, it is plain that his *seeming* knowledge of English was more copious than that of those who lecture him. It was not at all necessary that he should go to Roman glossers, to find the fitting use of a legal term of his own language. It occurs in many of our old authors, as in Chaucer—

> "Dampned was he to die in that prison
> For Roger, which that bishop was of Pise,
> Had on him made a false *suggestion*," &c.

In this speech of Katherine, the word succeeding *suggestion* has occasioned some controversy. Sir Thomas Hanmer proposed to read, "one that by suggestion *tythed* all the kingdom;" and Dr. Farmer agrees with him, supporting the reading by a passage from Hall, in which Wolsey is represented as telling the lord-mayor and aldermen, that though half their substance would be too little for his demands, yet that, upon an average, a tenth would be sufficient. "Sirs, speake not to breake the thynge that is concluded, for *some* shall not paie the *tenth* part, and *some* more." Warburton explains the word *ty'd* as a term of gaming, and signifying *equalled*. The bishop might have supported his interpretation by a passage of Hall, in which Wolsey is accused of having, by various extortions under form of law, "made his treasure egall with the kynges;" but I doubt if such was its meaning in the times of Shakespeare. Tollet, objecting to *tythed*, on the ground that as Katherine had already accused Wolsey of having extorted a *sixth* (*i. e.* almost *double-*

tythed the country), she would not now, in this hostile summing up of his political career, diminish the charge — interprets *ty'd* as "limited, circumscribed, set bounds to the liberties and properties of all persons in the kingdom;" which is rather strained. Shall I offer a guess? Might it not have been—

"One that by suggestion
Flay'd all the kingdom."

If any body wishes to laugh at my conjecture, he has my consent; but I could say some thing in its favor, nevertheless. The Roman maxim, we all know, is that a good shepherd should shear, not flay his flock; but Wolsey being, in Queen Katherine's opinion, the reverse of a *bonus pastor*, preferred the latter operation. *Valeat quantum!* I certainly think there is some corruption in the received text.

V. "It is scarcely worth mentioning," says the *Essay*, "that two or three Latin passages, which are met with in our author, are immediately transcribed from the story or the chronicle before him." It is not worth mentioning at all, for how is a quotation to be given, except in the exact words of the authority. In *Henry V.*, Farmer remarks that the maxim of Gallic law, "In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant," cited by Archbishop Chicheley in his argument, is found in Holinshed. This is a wonderful discovery; to which may be added that the whole speech, as we have it in Shakespeare, is merely a transposition of Holinshed's prose into blank verse. Nothing more was meditated. Holinshed copied Hall, making the blunder of substituting Louis the *tenth* for Louis the *ninth*, which Shakespeare of course followed. Whencesoever derived, the speech bears all the impress of being reported — I speak technically and professionally; and if it contains some historical errors, which rouse the easily excitable spleen of Ritson, we may probably impute them not to Shakespeare, or Holinshed, or Hall, but to the Most Reverend orator himself. On the principle repeatedly

laid down in the *Essay*, the dramatist must be convicted of ignorance, because he did not study the genealogies of "King Pepin, which deposed Childerich," and set every thing right about

> "the lady Lingare,
> Daughter to Charlemain, who was the son
> To Lewis the emperor, and Lewis the son
> Of Charles the Great,"

and all the other persons pressed, without much ceremony, into his service by the Carthusian archbishop.

But if it be a cheap piece of Latinity to be able to quote this bit of Salic law, which certainly proves nothing more than that Shakespeare had read Holinshed, and could understand five or six Latin words, Dr. Farmer could not, I think, so easily account for a passage which occurs a little further on, in the speech of the Duke of Exeter.*

> "While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,
> The advised head defends itself at home:
> For government, though [r. *through*] high and low and lower,
> Put into parts, doth keep in one concent,
> Congruing in a full and natural close,
> Like music."

Theobald pointed out the similarity between these lines and a passage in the second book of Cicero's *De Republica:* "Sic ex summis, et mediis, et infimis interjectis ordinibus ut sonis, moderatam ratione civitatem consensu dissimiliorum concinere; et quæ harmonia a musicis dicitur in cantu, eam esse in civitate concordiam." In Knight's edition of *Henry V.*, it is justly remarked, that if Theobald had taken the whole passage, as quoted by St. Augustin, the parallelism would seem closer; and it is impossible that it can be accidental. In Shakespeare's time, and for a couple of centuries later, this fragment of Cicero was to be found only in a treatise of St. Augustin, supposed—

* Ought not this learning to be transferred from the Duke to the Bishop of Ely?—W. M.

justly, I think — to have been suggested by the *De Republicâ*. Where did Shakespeare find it then? We have no translation to help us here. Knight's commentator refers to Plato as the originator of the thought — observing, that "Cicero's *De Republicâ* was, as far as we know, an adaptation of Plato's republic; the sentence we have quoted is almost literally to be found in Plato; and, what is still more curious, the lines of Shakespeare are more deeply imbued with the Platonic philosophy than the passage in Cicero;" a position which he succeeds in proving. The most remarkable thing is, that Shakespeare has really caught the main argument of the treatise, and expounded it in a few lines almost as a commentator. In the *Nugæ Curialiæ* of John of Salisbury, who had evidently read this lost book, the passage does not occur; only half of it is in what was found by Mai. But in the *Nugæ Curialiæ* we have the simile of the bees, as patterns of good government, with a long extract from "Maro" (*Georg.* lib. iv. v. 149, &c.), and also the distinction between the *manus armata* — the armed hand which is to defend kingdoms, and the prince, who, as the *caput* of the state, is to hold council at home. It is altogether a puzzling piece of critical inquiry. No illiterate man, at all events, found the passage.

VI. I have, I think, noticed every point of Latin ignorance adduced by Farmer, except one.

"In the *Merchant of Venice*, the Jew, as an apology for his cruelty to Antonio, rehearses many *sympathies* and *antipathies*, for which *no reason can be rendered:*

> "'Some love not a gaping pig;
> And others, when the *bagpipe* sings i' th' nose,
> Can not contain their urine for *affection.*'

This incident, Dr. Warburton supposes to be taken from a passage in Scaliger's *Exercitations* against Cardan: 'Narrabo tibi jocosam sympathiam *Reguli Vasconis* equitis: is dum viveret audito *phormingis* sono, urinam illico facere cogebatur.' 'And,' proceeds the Doctor, 'to

make this jocular story still more ridiculous, Shakespeare, I suppose, translated *phorminx* by *bagpipe*.'

"Here we seem fairly caught; for Scaliger's work was never, as the term goes, *done into English*. But luckily, in an old translation from the French of Peter le Loier, entitled, *A Treatise of Specters, or strange Sights, Visions, and Apparitions, appearing sensibly unto Men*, we have this identical story from Scaliger; and, what is still more, a marginal note gives us, in all probability, the very fact alluded to, as well as the word of Shakespeare: 'Another gentleman of this quality liued of late in Deuon, neere Excester, who could not endure the playing on a *bagpipe*.'"

Scaliger was much more read in the days of Elizabeth, than any ordinary dipper into books in the present day may be inclined to imagine. Why did he not notice the following note by Warburton on *Love's Labor's Lost*, Act V. sc. 1, where Holofernes declares the fashionable pronunciation of words to be "abhominable?"—

"This is abominable, &c.] He has here well imitated the language of the most redoubtable pedants of that time; on such sort of occasions, Joseph Scaliger used to break out, 'Abominor, execror. Asinitas mera est impietas,' &c.; and he calls his adversary, 'Lectum stercore maceratum, demoniscum, recumentum, inscitiæ sterquilinium, stercus diaboli, scarabæum, larvam, pecus postremum, bestiarum, infame propudium, *καθαρμα*.'"—*Warburton*.

I should be very reluctant, indeed, to say that this quotation is literally correct, unless I saw it in Scaliger, among whose works it is scarcely worth while to hunt it out, well knowing the danger of quoting after the bishop, when he does not give a reference; but if it be in Scaliger, as it appears in Warburton, I can only say that Dr. Farmer did not act fairly in passing it by.

So much for the Latin part of Dr. Farmer's performance. It has literally proved nothing toward his purpose. A man, by teasing himself to death in reading Translations, Pantheons, Flores, Sententiæ, Delectus, Polymetes, Elegant Extracts, and all that miserable second-hand work, might do some thing toward

what is to be found in Shakespeare. He might—*perhaps*—but only perhaps. Is it not a thing as easily to be believed that Shakespeare could read—

"Aliæ panduntur inanes
Ad ventos,"

soft Pagan Latin of Virgil, as easily as "Sum stentit bene in wisnand wyndis wake," &c., the wondrously hard Scoto-Saxon of Douglas; or endeavor to master the smooth verses of *Æneid*, as the rugged hexameters of Stanyhurst.

The knowledge or ignorance of Shakespeare with respect to the modern languages remains to be considered. The consideration will be brief; and with that, and some reflections on dramatic composition in general, I shall release my reader.

Part III.—The Modern Languages.

The concluding pages of Doctor Farmer's *Essay* are devoted to Shakespeare's knowledge of the modern languages. And, first, of Italian:—

"It is *evident*, we have been told, that he was not unacquainted with the Italian; but let us inquire into the *evidence*. Certainly, some Italian words and phrases appear in the works of Shakespeare; yet, if we had nothing else to observe, their orthography might lead us to suspect them not to be of the author's importation. But we can go further and prove this. When Pistol 'cheers up himself with ends of verse,' he is only a copy of Hanniball Gonsaga, who ranted on yielding himself a prisoner to an English captain in the Low Countries, as you may read in an old collection of tales, called *Wits, Fits, and Fancies:*

"'Si fortuna me tormenta,
Il speranza me contenta.'

And Sir Richard Hawkins, in his voyage to the South Sea, 1593, throws out the same jingling distich, on the loss of his pinnace."

A magnificent judge Dr. Farmer appears to be of Italian! I avail myself here willingly of what is said by Mr. Brown, in his *Shakespeare's Autobiography*:—

"Dr. Farmer thus speaks of the Italian words introduced into his plays: 'Their orthography might lead us to suspect them to be not of the writer's importation.' Whose, then, with bad orthography? I can not understand this suspicion; but perhaps it implies that the words, being incorrectly printed, were not originally correct. The art of printing was formerly far from being so exact as at present; but even now, I beg leave to say, I rarely meet with an Italian quotation

in an English book that is correct; yet I can perceive plainly enough, from the context, the printer is alone to blame. In the same way I see that the following passage, in the *The Taming of the Shrew*, bears evident marks of having been correct, before it was corrupted in the printing of the first folios, and that it originally stood thus:—

"'*Petruchio.* Con tutto il core ben' trovato — may I say.
'*Hortensio.* Alla nostra casa ben' venuto, molto onorato signor mio Petruchio.'

These words show an intimate acquaintance with the mode of salutation on the meeting of two Italian gentlemen; and they are precisely such colloquial expressions as a man might well pick up in his travels through the country. My own opinion is that Shakespeare, beyond the power of reading it, which is easily acquired, had not much knowledge of Italian; though I believe it infinitely surpassed that of Steevens, or of Dr. Farmer, or of Dr. Johnson; that is, I believe that, while they pretended to pass an unerring judgment on his Italian, they themselves must have been astonishingly ignorant of the language. Let me make good my accusation against all three. It is necessary to destroy their authority in this instance.

"Steevens gives this note in the *Taming of the Shrew*:—'*Me pardonato.* We should read, *Mi pardonate.*' Indeed, we should read no such thing as two silly errors in two common words. Shakespeare may have written *Mi perdoni*, or *Perdonatemi;* but why disturb the text further than by changing the syllable *par* into *per?* It then expresses, instead of *pardon me, me being pardoned*, and is suitable both to the sense and the metre:—

"'Me perdonato — gentle master mine.'

"Dr. Farmer says, 'When Pistol 'cheers up himself with ends of verse,' he is only a copy of Hanniball Gonsaga, who ranted on yielding himself a prisoner to an English captain in the Low Countries, as you may read in an old collection of tales, called *Wits, Fits, and Fancies*:—

"'Si fortuna me tormenta,
Il speranza me contenta.'

This is given as Italian, not that of the ignorant Pistol, nor of Shakespeare, but of Hanniball Gonsaga; but how comes it that Dr. Farmer did not look into the first few pages of a grammar, to teach him that the lines must have been these? —

"'Se fortuna mi tormenta,
La speranza mi contenta.'

And how could he corrupt orthography (a crying sin with him) in the name of Annibale Gonzaga?

"Upon this very passage Dr. Johnson has a note, and following the steps of Sir Thomas Hanmer, puts his foot, with uncommon profundity, in the mud. He says: 'Sir Thomas Hanmer reads, *Si fortuna me tormenta, il sperare me contenta*, which is undoubtedly the true reading; but perhaps it was intended that Pistol should corrupt it.' Perhaps it was; but 'undoubtedly' the Doctor, in his 'true reading,' containing five blunders in eight words, has carried corruption too far."

If Shakespeare had all the Italian knowledge of the Della Cruscans, he could not have made Pistol quote this saying in any other way. Pistol's acquaintance with any foreign language was of course picked up from jest-books, or from the conversation of those whose sayings contribute to fill works of the kind; but it is pleasant to find Drs. Farmer and Johnson bearing testimony to the accuracy of broken Italian, and making matters still worse than Pistol. We must admit that, as Dr. Farmer referred only to the *Wits, Fits, and Fancies*, he was not bound to give the name of Hanniball Gonsaga, or the Italian distich, otherwise than as he there found them. It might have been expected, from so exact a critic, that he should have expressed his opinion that the Italian was not perfectly correct; and his having omitted to do so may lead to the suspicion that he knew as little about the matter as Dr. Johnson himself, who lectures Shakespeare with all the gravity, but by no means the accuracy, of Holofernes.

The second piece of Italian is almost as amusing:—

"'Master Page, sit; good Master Page, sit: *proface*, what you want in meat, we'll have in drink,' says Justice Shallow's *factotum*, Davy, in the *Second Part of Henry IV.* *Proface*, Sir Thomas Hanmer observes to be Italian, from *profaccia* — much good may it do you. Mr. Johnson rather thinks it a mistake for *perforce*. Sir Thomas Hanmer, however, is right: yet it is no argument for his author's Italian knowledge."

Then follow three quotations from Heywood, Dekker, and Waterpoet Taylor, in which the word occurs. Other English authorities are added by the commentators. So far so good; but the learned mind of Steevens misgives him. "I am still," he says, "in doubt whether there be such an Italian word as *profaccia*. Baretti has it not, and it is more probable that we received it from the French; *proface* being a colloquial abbreviation of the phrase, *Bon prou leur face, i. e.*, Much good may it do them. See Cotgrave, in voce *Prou*." And Malone informs us that "Sir Thomas Hanmer (as an ingenious friend observes to me) was mistaken in supposing *profaccia* a regular (*regular!*) Italian word; the proper expression being *buon pro vi faccia*, much good may it do you! *Profaccia* is, however, I am informed, a *cant* term used by the common people in Italy, though it is not inserted in the best Italian dictionaries." The fact is that *proface*, or *prouface*, or *prounface*, is a *Norman* word, derived from the Latin *proficiat*, signifying, as Cotgrave says, though he does not give its origin, "Much good may it do you" (*i. e.*, my pledging), and has no connection with Italian at all.* The most diverting part of the business is the conjectural sagacity of Johnson in reading *perforce*. Had poor Theobald done any thing of the kind, or "the Oxford Editor," how sharp and biting would have been the indignation of the variorum critics! Dr. Farmer, knowing nothing of the matter, never suspected that Sir Thomas Hanmer had made a mistake as to the Italianism of *profaccia;* for his next sentence is: "But the editors are not contented without coining Italian." *Profaccia*, there-

* Roquefort: *Glossaire de la Langue Romane.* "PROUFACE, *prounface;* Souhait qui veut dire, bien vous fasse; proficiat." It is used so lately as by Paul Louis Courrier, in his translation of Lucian's *Ass:* "*Bon prou te fasse,*" vol. iii., p. 47; but he was an avowed imitator of the antique style. There is no authority for it in his Greek original; and I am not sure that he uses it properly, for he employs it merely as an ironical wish for good luck, without any reference to drinking. I suppose it is now obsolete in France.—W. M.

fore, to Farmer, was *not* a coined word. The words which *are* coined are *rivo*—*monarcho*—*baccare*.

1. "*Rivo*, says the drunkard," is an expression of the madcap Prince of Wales; which Sir Thomas Hanmer corrects to *ribi*, drink away, or *again*, as it should rather be translated. Dr. Warburton accedes to this; and Mr. Johnson hath admitted into his text, but with an observation that "*rivo* might possibly be the cant of the English taverns." Sir Thomas Hanmer had not read Marston, or many other of our older wits, or he would have found that *rivo* is what Johnson conjectured it to be. This is no great harm; but fancying that *ribi* is Italian for "drink away," or "drink again," is no remarkable proof of the Tuscan knowledge of the critic who proposed the reading, or of those who admitted it. *Rivo*, however, is *not* Italian; and it has not been traced to any European language, in any thing like the sense intended in the English authors. I suspect that it is only *ribaux*—rakes, ribalds. "Ho, my blades! my bullies!" *Aux ribaux!* Rivo! I do not press the conjecture, but refer for some authority to a note.*

* Ribaldi, says Ducange, were "velites, enfans perdus, milites, qui prima prœlia tentabant." Of course, they were the least valued troops—thence any good-for-nothing fellows, "good enough to toss" in an army; and as these people led profligate and dissolute lives, "usurpata deinde Ribaldorum vox pro hominibus vilissimis, abjectis, perditis, scortatoribus:" in French, *ribaux*. Ducange supplies several quotations, of which I take a couple:—

"Gulielmus *Guiart* MS.
Bruient soudouiers et ribaus,
Qui de tout perdre sont si baus,
—*Roman de la Rose.*
Mais Ribaus ont les cuers si baus,
Portant sacs de charbon en Grève,
Que la peine riens ne leur grève."

In earlier times, it was not a word of reproach; and the *ribauds* in the days of Philippe Augustus were "soldats d'élite auxquels ce prince avoit grande créance en ses exploits militaires." But, as Pasquier remarks, "Peu-à-peu cette compagnie de ribauds, qui avoit tenu dedans la France lieu de primauté entre les guerriers s'abatardit, tomba en l'opprobre de tout le monde, et en

2. For *monarcho*, in *Love's Labor's Lost*, Sir Thomas Hanmer, who was not aware that there was actually a fantastic character well known by that name in London in the days of Elizabeth, proposed to read *mammuccia*. An infelicitous conjecture at the best. And,

3. For *baccare*, in the *Taming of the Shrew* (a common English phrase of the time, whatever its exact etymology may be,

je ne sais quelle engeance de putassiers." They continued to hang about the court of France in the Middle Ages, which, like all other courts of the time, was filled with a crowd of idle followers; and they were subjected to the government of an officer named *roi de ribaux*, part of whose duty was to keep the palace, in eating time, free of disorderly persons. It is ordered, in 1317, "Item, assavoir est que les huissiers de salle si tost comme l'en aura crié, *Aux queux*, feront vuider la salle de toutes gens fors ceus qui doivent mengier, et les doivent livrer à l'huys de la salle aux varlets de porte aux portiers; et les portiers doivent tenir la cour nette, et les livrer au roy des ribaux; et le roy des ribaux doit garder, que il n'entre plus à la porte, et cil qui sera trouvé defaillans sera pugny par le maistre de l'hostel, qui servira la journée." I conjecture, that when the proper officer cried, "Aux queux!" [*i. e.*, cooks!] the cry might be met by the gang turned out to make room for these "qui doivent mengier," with "Aux ribaux;" and thence made, by an easy lapse, *ribaux*, *rivaux*, *rivo*, as the peculiar rallying call of drunken people. It is so used by the prince, in the very place referred to, when he shouts for Falstaff. "*Rivo!* says the drunkard — call in ribs, call in tallow."

It is sometimes joined with *Castiliano*, as in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*:—

"Hey, Rivo Castiliano, man's a man."

And in the old comedy of *Look about You* —

"And *Rivo* will he cry, and *Castile* too."

"Castiliano" was, in all probability, a rallying cry in the Spanish armies. [*Castilla* is three times cried at the coronation of kings of Spain,

"While trumpets rang, and heralds cried '*Castile.*'"

Scott's *Don Roderick*, st. xliii.]

And as the Spaniards had the reputation of being great swaggerers, they might be fitly called on, as associates, by those who were shouting for the ribaux. Steevens quotes the lines from Marlowe and the old play, in a note on *Twelfth-Night*, Act I., sc. 3, where Sir Toby cries out, "What, wench! *Castiliano vulgo* — for here comes Sir Andrew Aguecheek." For *vulgo*, Warburton proposes *volto;* as if recommending Maria to put on her grave, solemn looks, which is the last advice Toby would think of giving; and she does just the contrary. Perhaps it should be "Castiliano luego." "Castilian, at once." *Vulgo* and *luego* might be easily confounded.—W. M.

and I own that I have not seen as yet anything very satisfactory), Theobald and Warburton, and Heath, propose *baccalare* as the Italian for "a graduated scholar, and thence ironically for a pretender to scholarship."

Now, neither *mammuccia* nor *baccalare* are coined—they are good Italian words, though not at all wanted in the places to which they are introduced by the conjectural critics. But why should Shakespeare be pronounced ignorant of Italian, because Sir Thomas Hanmer, unaware of the existence of a real man nicknamed Monarcho, which was excusable enough, and Warburton unread in our Elizabethan literature, which in a commentator on Shakespeare is not quite so excusable, made a couple of unhappy conjectures, proving nothing more than they were not infallible in verbal criticism. As for *baccalare*, Nares, in his *Glossary*, remarks that "the word (*backare*) was unpropitious to critics, who would have changed it to *baccalare*, an Italian word of reproach." *Baccalare* is not very propitious to Nares himself, because it is scarcely a word of *reproach*. The Della Cruscans, in giving its second meaning, say, "Dicesi altresi d'uomo de gran reputazione, ma per lo più per ischerzo. Lat. *Vir eximius, præcellens singularis*." Hardly words of reproach, any more than *bone vir* in Terence, though applied by the angry master to the cheating slave. I doubt very much, indeed, that *baccalare* is ever applied, by itself, in jest (*per ischerzo*), but is used sometimes jokingly, not reproachfully, when it is accompanied by *gran*. *Gran baccalare* is one who gives himself great airs; as we sometimes call a noisy swaggerer a great hero, or a great officer, without offering any affront to the names of officer or hero. The examples in the *Della Crusca* bear out this view of its meaning. *Ex. gr.* Bocc. Nov. 15, 24:—"Vide uno, il quale per quello che comprender pote, mostrava d'essere *gran bacalare*, con una barba nera, e

folta al volto." *Galat.* 28.—"Millitandosi, e dicendo di avere le maraviglie, e di essere *gran bacalari*," &c., &c.

If these be the only proofs of Shakespeare's want of Italian knowledge, never was case more meagre. They amount exactly to this, that Shakespeare uses four words quite common in his time, two of which his commentators, for whose ignorance it is not reasonable that he should answer, corrupt into Italian; and two more, which, though these gentlemen think differently, are not Italian at all, or intended as such; and that, elsewhere, he makes a buffoon character quote a couple of ungrammatical jingles from a jest-book, which his critics by mending make more corrupt. A noble style of argument! particularly in the case of an author who elsewhere employs Italian words and quotations with perfect propriety and correctness.

Dr. Farmer supposes the *Taming of the Shrew* not to be "originally the work of Shakespeare, but restored by him to the stage, with the whole Induction of the Tinker, and some other occasional improvements," &c. The reasons he gives for this opinion are not over sagacious; and our increased knowledge of dramatic history and bibliography has left them no value whatever. If the play be Shakespeare's at all, Dr. Farmer is sure that it is one of his earliest productions, in which he is supported by Malone (*Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays*, No. 6); who admits, however, that he had formerly been of a different opinion, which I think he was very wrong in altering. But as I have noticed the play, not with any intention of descanting on its intrinsic merits (though sadly urged thereto by Bishop Hurd's most absurd and somewhat offensive observations on the Induction, contained in his pedantic and ridiculous commentary on the Epistle to Augustus), but of pointing out a very different theory respecting the date and origin of the play, I shall not enter upon the question

of its poetical or dramatic value. It is contended that it was one of the later plays, and written after a journey to Italy.

"I proceed," says Mr. Brown, "to show he was in Italy from the internal evidence of his works; and I begin with his *Taming of the Shrew*, where the evidence is the strongest. This comedy was entirely re-written from an older one by an unknown hand, with some, but not many, additions to the fable. It should first be observed, that in the older comedy, which we possess, the scene is laid in and near Athens, and that Shakespeare removed it to Padua and its neighborhood; an unnecessary change, if he knew no more of one country than of the other. The *dramatis personæ* next attract our attention. Baptista is no longer erroneously the name of a woman, as in *Hamlet*, but of a man. All the other names, except one, are pure Italian, though most of them are adapted to the English ear. Biondello, the name of a boy, seems chosen with a knowledge of the language — as it signifies a little fair-haired fellow. Even the shrew has the Italian termination to her name, Katharina. The exception is Curtis, Petruchio's servant, seemingly the housekeeper at his villa; which, as it is an insignificant part, may have been the name of the player; but, more probably, it is a corruption of Cortese.

"Act I., scene 1. *A public place.* For an open place, or a square in a city, this is not a home-bred expression. It may be accidental; yet it is a literal translation of *una piazza publica*, exactly what was meant for the scene.

"The opening of the comedy, which speaks of Lombardy and the university of Padua, might have been written by a native Italian:—

> "'Tranio, since — for the great desire I had
> To see fair Padua, nursery of arts, —
> I am arrived for fruitful Lombardy,
> The pleasant garden of great Italy.
> * * * *
> Here let us breathe, and happily institute
> A course of learning, and ingenious studies.'

"The very next line I found myself involuntarily repeating, at the sight of the grave countenances within the walls of Pisa:—

> "'Pisa, renowned for grave citizens.'*

* It could hardly be expected that, while I write, a confirmatory commentary, and from the strangest quarter, should turn up on these words; but so it is. A quarrel lately occurred in Youghal, arising from a dispute about

They are altogether a grave people, in their demeanor, their history, and their literature, such as it is. I never met with the anomaly of a merry Pisan. Curiously enough, this line is repeated, word for word, in the fourth act. Lucentio says, his father came 'of the Bentivolii.' This is an old Italian plural. A mere Englishman would write 'of the Bentivolios.' Besides, there was, and is, a branch of the Bentivolii in Florence, where Lucentio says he was brought up. But these indications, just at the commencement of the play, are not of great force. We now come to something more important; a remarkable proof of his having been aware of the law of the country in respect to the betrothment of Katharina and Petruchio, of which there is not a vestige in the older play. The father gives her hand to him, both parties consenting, before two witnesses, who declare themselves such to the act. Such a ceremony is as indissoluble as that of marriage, unless both parties should consent to annul it. The betrothment takes place in due form, exactly as in many of Goldoni's comedies:—

> "'*Baptista.* . . . . . Give me your hands;
> God send you joy, Petruchio! 'tis a match.
> *Gremio and Tranio.* Amen! say we; we will be witnesses.'

instantly Petruchio addresses them as 'father and wife;' because, from that moment, he possesses the legal power of a husband over her, saving that of taking her to his own house. Unless the betrothment is understood in this light, we can not account for the father's so tamely yielding afterward to Petruchio's whim of going in his 'mad attire' with her to the church. Authority is no longer with the father; in vain he hopes and requests the bridegroom will change his clothes; Petruchio is peremptory in his lordly will and pleasure, which he could not possibly be, without the previous Italian betrothment.

"Padua lies between Verona and Venice, at a suitable distance from both, for the conduct of the comedy. Petruchio, after being securely betrothed, sets off for Venice, the very place for finery, to buy 'rings and things, and fine array' for the wedding; and, when married, he takes her to his country-house in the direction of Verona, of which city he is a native. All this is complete, and in marked opposition to

precedency between two ladies at a ball; and one of the witnesses, a travelled gentleman, in his cross-examination, gives the following opinion of Pisa: "I did not see —— in the room that night; he is now in Pisa, which I don't think a pleasanter place than a court of justice: I think it a d——d sickening place. It is much too holy for me." This was deposed to so lately as the 10th of October, 1839.—W. M.

the worse than mistakes in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which was written when he knew nothing whatever of the country.

"The rich old Gremio, when questioned respecting the dower he can assure to Bianca, boasts, as a primary consideration, of his richly furnished house:—

> "'First, as you know, my house within the city
> Is richly furnished with plate and gold;
> Basins and ewers, to lave her dainty hands;
> My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry:
> In ivory coffers I have stuffed my crowns,
> In cypress chests my arras, counterpoints,
> Costly apparel, tents, and canopies;
> Fine linen, Turkey cushions 'bossed with pearl,
> Valance of Venice gold in needlework;
> Pewter and brass, and all things that belong
> To house, or housekeeping.'

"Lady Morgan, in her *Italy*, says (and my own observation corroborates her account), 'There is not an article here described, that I have not found in some one or other of the palaces of Florence, Venice, and Genoa — the mercantile republics of Italy — even to the 'Turkey cushions 'bossed with pearl.' She then adds, 'This is the knowledge of genius, acquired by the rapid perception and intuitive appreciation,' &c., never once suspecting that Shakespeare had been an eye-witness of such furniture. For my part, unable to comprehend the intuitive knowledge of genius, in opposition to her ladyship's opinion, I beg leave to quote Dr. Johnson: — 'Shakespeare, however favored by nature, could impart only what he had learned.' With this text as our guide, it behooves us to point out how he could obtain such an intimate knowledge of facts, without having been, like Lady Morgan, an eye-witness to them.

"In addition to these instances, the whole comedy bears an Italian character, and seems written as if the author has said to his friends, 'Now I will give you a comedy, built on Italian manners, neat as I myself have imported.' Indeed, did I not know its archetype, with the scene in Athens, I might suspect it to be an adaptation of some unknown Italian play, retaining rather too many local allusions for the English stage.

"Some may argue that it was possible for him to learn all this from books of travels now lost, or in conversation with travellers; but my faith recoils from so bare a possibility, when the belief that he saw what he described is, in every point of view, without difficulty, and

probable. Books and conversation may do much for an author; but, should he descend to particular descriptions, or venture to speak of manners and customs intimately, is it possible he should not once fall into error with no better instruction? An objection has been made, imputing an error, in Grumio's question, are the '*rushes strewed?*' But the custom of strewing rushes in England, belonged also to Italy; this may be seen in old authors, and their very word *giuncare*, now out of use, is a proof of it. English Christian names, incidentally introduced, are but translations of the same Italian names, as Catarina is called Katharine and Kate; and, if they were not, comedy may well be allowed to take a liberty of that nature."

This, certainly, is ingenious, as also are the arguments drawn by Mr. Brown from *Othello* and the *Merchant of Venice;* and I understand that a later lady-traveller in Italy than Lady Morgan coincides in the same view of the case; and she is a lady * who ought to know "How to Observe." At all events, there is nothing improbable that Shakespeare, or any other person of cultivated mind, or easy fortune — and he was both — should have visited the famed and fashionable land of Italy. There was much more energy and action among the literary men — among men in general, indeed, of the days of Elizabeth than of the last century; when making the "grand tour," as they called it, was considered an undertaking to be ventured on only by a great lord or squire, who looked upon it as a formal matter of his life. The sparks, and wits, and critics, and moralists, and dramatists, and so forth, in the time of the first Georges, either Cockneyised in London or confined themselves to the universities. One set did not look beyond the coffee-houses, taverns, inns of court, public-houses, and play-houses of the metropolis; the views of the others were in general confined to the easier shelves of the library, or the wit and tobacco of the common room. Going abroad required an effort beyond ordinary culculation, or ordinary ambition. To get as far as Paris was an event demanding much thought and preparation before-

* Harriet Martineau.—M.

hand, and entitling him who performed it to much wonderment ever after. Italy was quite out of their line; and those who travelled to a region so remote had marvels to tell for ever. Professed, or rather professional tours, were made there, resulting in collections of letters crammed with accounts of bad dinners, detestable roads, diabolical inns, and black-whiskered banditti; or ponderous works commonplacing about admirable antiques, astonishing architecture, supereminent paintings, divine scenery, and celestial climates. The buoyant spirit of the friends of Raleigh, Sidney, Essex, was gone. No war, no taking of service, nothing calling on the notice of "a man of action," led to the Continent in the sodden days which followed the peace of Utrecht, and preceded the outburst of the French Revolution; and the means and appliances by which a trip to Constantinople is now-a-days as little regarded, and as lightly provided for, as a trip to Calais in the days of our grandsires, were not in being. The nation was asleep in the middle of the last century, and its literature snored in the general slumber. "In great Eliza's golden time" it was not only awake, but vigorous in the rude strength of manly activity. The spirit of sea-adventure was not dead while Drake, and his brother "shepherds of the ocean" lived; and an enthusiastic mind of that period would think far less, and make far less talk about a voyage to the Spanish Main, than Johnson did, near a couple of centuries afterward, of jolting to the North of Scotland. The activity of Shakespeare or his contemporaries is not to be judged of by the sloth of their accessors "upon town," or "in the literary world." It is to me evident that Shakespeare had been at sea, from his vivid description of maritime phenomena, and his knowledge of the management of a vessel, whether in calm or storm. The very first note of Dr. Johnson brings him and his author into a contrast not very favorable to the commentator. On the opening of the *Tempest* we are told: "In

this naval dialogue, perhaps the first example of sailors' language upon the stage, there are, as I have been told by a skilful navigator, some inaccuracies and contradictory orders."

If to stumble on the threshold be unlucky, this is a most unlucky opening. In the first place, an acquaintance with Shakespeare himself ought to have made the Doctor know that in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, generally attributed to him (I have no doubt that he wrote, or re-wrote, every line of it), produced some fifteen or sixteen years before the *Tempest*, there was a scene of sea language; and, in the next place, Constantine, second Lord Mulgrave, an experienced sailor (he was the Captain Phipps who sailed toward the North Pole, and a captain in the navy at the age of twenty-one—no jobbing, of course), proves by a practical and scientific analysis of the boatswain's orders, not only that each was the very best, that could be given in the impending danger, but that all were issued in the exact order in which they were required. This Constantine, Lord Mulgrave, was uncle of the present Marquess of Normanby; so that, on the principle of family merit, even the Tories ought to abate their wrath somewhat against the ex-lord-lieutenant,* on the ground of his connection with one who, besides having been at sea Nelson's earliest captain, may boast of contributing to save the national favorite of old England,

> "Whose flag has braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze,"

from the reputation of being no better than a landlubber. Lord Mulgrave's note, which is a very clever one, will be found in Boswell's *Shakespeare*, vol. xv. pp. 184–6, at the end of the *Tempest*. His lordship says, that perhaps Shakespeare might have picked up his nautical knowledge from conversation; but, though his lordship tells that to the marines, as a sailor he does

* The Marquis had been Viceroy of Ireland.—M.

not believe it. It is, indeed, *possible* that he might; it is highly *probable* that he obtained it from actual observation. If we are disinclined (why we should be so, I can not tell) to grant that he travelled in foreign countries, is it too much to suppose that he might have made a voyage to Cork, on a visit to his friend Spenser, dwelling beneath

> "Old Father Mole — Mole hight that mountain gray,
> That walls the north side of Armulla's vale?"

From Italian, thus triumphantly disposed of, we are called upon to consider Shakespeare's Spanish. This item is short. Dr. Grey is willing to suppose that the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* may be borrowed from a COMEDY of Lopez de Vega; and, "In the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*, the Tinker attempts to talk Spanish; and, *consequently*, [the Italics are Farmer's] the author himself was acquainted with it. *Paucas pallabris;* let the world slide: *Sessa!*" As *pocas palabras* was an ordinary cant expression of the time, and used in several plays, those who imagined that Shakespeare's knowledge of Spanish was a necessary consequence of using those two words, must not be considered as very sage personages. I know not who they were, but I know when it is assumed as a proof of ignorance of Spanish that Shakespeare quoted two words of it in jest, which had been quoted elsewhere before, the logic is strange; nor when I learn that Dr. Grey is mistaken in imagining that *Romeo and Juliet* was derived from "a COMEDY [so marked, I can not tell why] of Lopes de Vega," [so spelt, I well know why; because Farmer's reading having been only casually Spanish, he did not know or think there was any need of taking the trouble to inquire what was the real name of the dramatist], am I inclined to believe that, because Shakespeare did not find an Italian story in a Spanish author, he could not have read Spanish. He knew as much of it, at all events, as his critics. I copy the following from Archdeacon Nares's *Glos-*

sary, a work of considerable pretence, and very disproportionate information. He is commenting on the phrase *miching malicho*, in *Hamlet*. "It seems agreed that this word is corrupted from the Spanish *malhecor*, which signifies a poisoner. By miching malicho, he means a skulking poisoner; or it may mean mischief, from *malheco*, evil action, which seems to me more probable; consequently, if *mincing malicho* be the right reading, its signification may be delicate mischief." Now the words are, not *malheco*, and *malhecor*, but *malhecho* and *malhechor*, *i. e.*, *malefactum* and *malefactor*, from which they are derived, and meaning no more than *ill-deed* and *ill-doer*, having nothing peculiar to connect them with poisoning or poisoner. That the text is corrupt, I am sure; and I think Dr. Farmer's substitution of *mimicking Malbecco*, a must unlucky attempt at emendation. In the old copies it is *munching malicho*, in which we find the traces of the true reading — *mucho malhecho*, much mischief.

"Marry *Muchs Malhêcho* — it means mischief."

On this passage Malone observes: "Where our poet met with the word *mallecho*, which in Minshieu's *Spanish Dictionary* is defined *malefactum*, I am unable to explain;" which is to be deplored. Might not Malone, without any great stretch of critical sagacity, have suspected that he met it while reading *Spanish?*

Remains but French. Of this, too, Shakespeare is ignorant, as of all things else; and yet, "in the play of *Henry V.* we have a whole scene in it, and in many other places it occurs familiarly in the dialogue." This is true, and one might think that it was tolerably sufficient to establish the fact that the writer of the dialogue knew the language. *Farmero aliter visum.* "We may observe in general, that the early editions have not half the quantity, and every sentence, or rather every word, most ridiculously blundered. Those, for several reasons, could

not be possibly published by the author; and it is extremely probable that the French ribaldry was at first inserted by a different hand, as the many additions most certainly were after he had left the stage. Indeed, every friend to his memory will not easily believe that he was acquainted with the scene between Catharine and the old gentlewoman, or surely he would not have admitted such obscenity and nonsense."

I am sorry for the introduction of this scene, but on a different ground. The obscenity, few as the lines are in which it occurs, and trifling if compared with what we find in contemporary French writers — and not at all polluting, as it turns merely on an indelicate mispronunciation of a couple of English words — is in all probability interpolated. It is precisely such *gag* as actors would catch at; and we must recollect that Catharine and Alice were originally personated, not by women, but by boys. Yet, I am sorry that it appears there, because it has always tended to give those foreigners who know French and do not know English — a circumstance once almost universal among critical readers out of England, and, though the balance is fast altering, still any thing but uncommon, in many parts of Europe — a false idea of the general contents of Shakespeare's plays. The French critics of the *goût* school, anxious to cry down the English dramatist, made the most of this scene; and represented to the ignorant all his plays as being of a similar character. This is to be regretted; but in this case, as in all others, truth lives out at last. The scene is no specimen at all of Shakespeare's genius, and a poor one of his wit. It is, however, a proof that he knew French. But "it is to be hoped that he did not understand it." Then it must be supposed by the hoper that he was a fool. Who can believe that he inserted, without being acquainted with what it meant, a scene in a play of which, as I shall soon have an opportunity of remarking more at large, he took uncommon care? As for the misprinting, there

is not a line of any foreign language which is not barbarously blundered in the quartos and folios; and, as Dr. Farmer well knew, no argument could be founded upon any such circumstance.

We have next, however, a very acute remark, for which we are indebted to the worthy Sir John Hawkins:—

"Mr. Hawkins, in the appendix to Mr. Johnson's edition, hath an ingenious observation to prove that Shakespeare, supposing the French to be his, had very little knowledge of the language. 'Est-il possible d'exchapper la force de ton *bras?*' says a Frenchman. 'Brass, cur!' replies Pistol. Almost every one knows that the French word *bras* is pronounced *brau;* and what resemblance does this bear to *brass?* Dr. Johnson makes a doubt, whether the pronunciation of the French language may not be changed since Shakespeare's time; if not, says he, it may be suspected that some other man wrote the French scenes. But this does not appear to be the case, at least in this termination, from the rules of the grammarians, or the practice of the poets. I am certain of the former, from the French *Alphabeth* of De la Mothe, and the *Orthoepia Gallica* of John Eliot; and of the latter from the rhymes of Marot, Ronsard, and Du Bartas, &c."

The logic of this is at least entertaining. The scene is *not* Shakespeare's because he could not write French, and yet the mispronunciation of the word *bras* proves that it was written by one who had very little knowledge of the language. Which horn of this dilemma are we to be caught upon? Here is a clever, idiomatic, burlesque scene in French, and in (what is as difficult to write consistently) an English *patois* of French, damaged, as Hawkins, Johnson, and Farmer think, by the mispronunciation of one word. Why, it does not require much consideration to perceive, that, whoever wrote the scene, even if the mispronunciation were of the utmost importance, knew French intimately well. Whether the word is *brass* or *braw,* no external reason whatever existing for our believing it not to proceed from the pen of Shakespeare, to Shakespeare it must be attributed. There is a great quantity of French in this

play, so introduced — in the speeches of the Dauphin and his companions, for example — as not to be separable from the rest of the dialogue; and the very scene, blemished in the ears of these exact critics, is, with an admirable dramatic artifice, introduced into the place where it occurs, for a reason which will take a little time to explain.

The battle of Agincourt was the last of the great *feudal* battles. Fire-arms were then speedily altering the whole face of tactical warfare; and that species of prowess which was so highly esteemed in the Middle Ages gradually became, long before Shakespeare's time, of less moment in actual combat. The knights sorely felt the change — perhaps the greatest made by physical means in the progress of society until the late applications of steam; and many a gentleman participated in the indignation expressed by the dainty courtier against villainous saltpetre. With this display of personal valor, the poetic interest of battles in a great measure departed. A modern battle has often sublime, but seldom picturesque features. Chance too much predominates over the fate of individuals to render victory or defeat in any visible degree dependent upon the greatest bravery, or the meanest cowardice, of any single person engaged, and the romantic or chivalrous bard can not deal with masses. When Burke said that the age of chivalry was gone, because ten thousand swords did not leap out of their scabbards to fight in the cause of Marie Antoinette, the orator might have reflected — if orators ever reflect upon any thing but the harmony of trope and figure — that the days of chivalry had departed long before — from the moment, in fact, that these ten thousand swords had become but secondary instruments in war. Milton is not the only poet (Ariosto, Spenser, and others, were beforehand with him) who assigns the invention of gunpowder to the devil. It would be rather out of place to prove, that unless his Satanic majesty has an interest in rendering

battles less sanguinary, he has no claim to the honor; but the knights were interested in crying out against an invention which deprived them, safe in the panoply of plate and mail, of the power of winning fame at the cheap rate of slaughtering imperfectly armed, or altogether unarmed, peasants and burghers; and the poets had to complain of the loss of the picturesque features of the fight, in which at present "nought distinct they see." Agincourt had no successor in the history of the world; for never again came such a host of axe-and-spear-brandishing princes, and dukes, and lords into personal conflict; nor could any other field boast of such a royal fellowship of death.* It was also the last great victory in Shakespeare's time that the English had won over the French. The war in France in Henry the Sixth's reign was little more than a guerilla tumult, in which the invaders, despite of "Henry's conquest, Bedford's vigilance, your deeds of war," and all the other topics invoked by Duke Humphrey, in declaring his grief, and of the many acts of individual bravery and energy of Talbot and others, were sure to be at last defeated in campaigns against a people gradually forgetting their domestic animosities to unite against foreign ravage. The wars of the Roses drew us from France to wield the lamentable arms of civil contest; and when at last "the flowers were blended in love and sisterly delight," the system which called forth such invasions as that of Henry V., and gave color to such claims as those adduced to render "France his true inheritance," was gone. Our present political arrangements, which are essentially anti-chivalric, had commenced their operations. The sixteenth century found us engaged in religious dissensions; and the eye, anxious to look

* The list fills more than three pages of Monstrelet, fol. 230, 231. Ed. 1595. The very title of the chapter (cxlviii.) marks the sad feeling of the historian: "Comment plusieurs princes, et autres notables seigneurs de diuers pays, furent morts *à ceste piteuse besongne.*"—W. M.

upon the brightest spot of our military glory, had nowhere to rest upon but Agincourt. That field is, therefore, dear at once to the poet of chivalry and of England, throughout this play of *Henry V.* treated with peculiar honor and respect. Shakespeare apologizes for the scantiness of his theatrical means to represent so glorious a battle: —

> "And so our scene must to the battle fly,
> Where (O for pity!) we shall much disgrace,
> With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
> Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
> The name of Agincourt."

This is one of the strongest touches of national feeling in all the plays.* In *Julius Cæsar* he had made no such apology for the raggedness of the foils, or the ridiculous brawl that represented Philippi, which crushed for ever the once resistless oligarchy of Rome; or in *Antony and Cleopatra*, for the like poverty in the

* Schlegel remarks, that in this play only has he introduced an Irishman and Scotchman speaking their *patois* of English. As it also contains the Welshman Fluellen, representatives from the three kingdoms and the principality are present at Agincourt. The industry of Malone, followed by Boswell, has rescued a few Irish words from a corruption which sadly puzzled and embroiled former critics. The *qualtitie calmie custure me* of the old copy of *Henry V.*, Act IV., sc. 4, was conjectured by Malone to be no more than a burden of a song, "When as I view your comely grace,"—*Calen o custure me*, &c. And Boswell finds this to be in reality an old Irish song, preserved in Playford's *Musical Companion*, where it appears as *Callino castore me*. It is not very hard for an Irish reader to disentangle from this, *Colleen* (or, more Celtically, *cailin*) *og, astore me*,—"Pretty girl, my darling for ever." It was, perhaps, all the Irish that Shakespeare had — having learned it, as we may have supposed Pistol would have done, from hearing it sung as a refrain. The words have no application to what the poor Frenchman says; but as he concludes by *cal*-ite, Pistol retorts by a somewhat similar word, and as unintelligible, *cal*-eno. On account of this general nationality of the play, I am inclined to think, in spite of Horne Tooke's somewhat angry assertion, when claiming *imp* as Saxon, that "our language has absolutely nothing from the Welsh" (*Div. Purl.*, vol. ii., p. 34, 4to), that when Henry V. is twice called "an *impe* of fame," the *Welsh* origin, justly or not assigned to the word, might not have been unknown or forgotten. The Welsh blood of Henry is continually insisted upon.—W. M.

representation of Actium, that gave the sovereignty of the Roman world, of which France was then no more than a conquered province, and into which England was soon about to be incorporated by the sword, to Augustus. Far more famous in Shakespeare's eyes was Agincourt; though, unlike those great Roman battles, it left scarcely any consequences of lasting importance behind; and at the close of the century and a half which elapsed between its being fought and the birth of the dramatist who approaches it with so much reverence, it was, for all practical purposes, as much forgotten as the battles of Richard Cœur de Lion in the Holy Land. English feelings did not so argue; and their great expounder only spoke in more eloquent and swelling language the thoughts of all his countrymen, when he made Henry predict that the names of Harry the king and his noble companions would be for ever the theme of gratulation.

> "And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
> From this day to the ending of the world,
> But we in it shall be remembered."*

* Johnson has a very strange note on these lines. "It may be observed, that we are apt to promise ourselves a more lasting memory than the change of human things admits. *This prediction is not verified;* the feast of Crispin passes by without any mention of Agincourt." How curiously Dr. Johnson has proved, by writing this very note, that he well knew that there was not the slightest chance of his forgetting that Agincourt was fought upon St. Crispin's Day! It is in all probability the only battle of which he could, without reference to books, have given the precise date. Blenheim, Ramilies, Malplaquet, Oudenarde, were fought about the period of his own birth, and yet we may be tolerably certain that he could not upon an instant have told the days on which they occurred — perfectly sure that he could not assign the saints to whom those days were dedicated. If the Doctor, in place of this bit of cheap moralizing, had reflected as a critic on the prediction which called forth his comment, he would have seen that Shakespeare, in promising immortal remembrance of the day on which Agincourt was fought, gave the immortality by the very words of promise. The dates of other fields, thought the poet, may be forgotten; but as long as the English language lasts, *I* shall take care, by means of this speech, that by all who know the English tongue, by all men — wherever English literature can penetrate — and that

Such, certainly, was the case in Shakespeare's time; and if the lapse of a couple of centuries has thrown its renown into the shade, it is because fields of fame and spheres of action, which he could not have anticipated, fill our recollections, and so occupy our thoughts (to say nothing of altered views of the causes and objects of war), as to make us think less of a feudal battle, which has nothing but the undaunted courage with which such tremendous odds were met [and that certainly is deserving of the admiration of all to whom bravery is dear] to recommend it to our memories; on which, however, it is indelibly stamped only by Shakespeare.

But with *his* feelings respecting Agincourt, what could he do with the battle? He was ashamed of representing in actual *mêlée* King Henry V., Bedford, Exeter, Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloster, by the ragged foils and beggarly appurtenances which he could command. *He therefore left them out altogether;* and to fill up the battle he supplies this scene, in which the buffoon-braggart Pistol is made to occupy the audience, and to tickle their national vanity by capturing and bullying a French gentleman. The French translator, Le Tourneur, (whose version, take it all in all, is highly creditable; and which,

will be all over the world — the names of those who commanded at Agincourt, the day on which *that* battle was fought, and the saints to whom it was dedicated, shall be freshly remembered; and he has kept his word. He has *not* "promised himself a more lasting memory" than he contemplated. Homer has shown us the same confidence of immortality. See *Il.* IX., 431, where Achilles says that it was predicted, if he warred against Troy, he should never return to his native land, but his glory would be ever imperishable. "Notandum hic," says Clarke, "quam singulari quamque modesto poeta artificio, gloriam dicat Achillis *suo* factam poemate sempiternam. Non, *exegi* dixit *monumentum;* non *jamque opus exegi;* nusquam sui meminit omninò; nusquam *suorum operum:* nusquam *patriæ;* nusquam, ne *partium* quidem *suarum;* ut adeo Europæusne fuerit ipse, an Asiaticus, plane non constat. Sed *Achillis* nomen atque famam immortalitati tradidit." This note would be applicable in almost all parts to Shakespeare. Clarke, it will be allowed, was a more perspicacious critic, and better understood the meaning and intention of his author than Johnson.—W. M.

when not only the difficulty of the task of translating such plays, but the absolute odium their translator risked in undertaking to praise and set off an author denounced by the dominant school of *goût* as something so offensive, as to render it a shame and disgrace even to quote his name in France, ought to have saved him from the dull buffoonery of Steevens), omits the scene, as unworthy of Shakespeare, from the text, and degrades it into a note. I can well appreciate the feeling; but if he reasoned not as a Frenchman, but as a dramatic critic, he would have seen that the only method Shakespeare possessed of escaping the difficulty of caricaturing Agincourt, *against his will*, by turning it, in consequence of his want of means, into a ridiculous brawl, was to seize upon that part of it which might be treated as *avowed* drollery and burlesque. And this scene, so justly and so skilfully introduced, Dr. Farmer wishes us to attribute to some other hand than that of him, who so carefully considered, planned, and arranged the play. And why? Because *bras* is pronounced *brass*—not *brau!* Lofty criticism!

> "The critic eye—that microscope of wit,
> Sees hairs, and pores, examines bit by bit;
> *How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,*—
> The body's harmony, the beaming soul,
> Are things which Burman, Kuster, Wasse, shall see
> When man's whole frame is obvious to a flea."

The satire upon Burman, Kuster, and Wasse, in those lines from the *Dunciad*, is unjust; because these learned men pretended to nothing beyond that which they learnedly performed,—the grammatical or scholastical explication of the text and language of their authors, over whom they never presumed to take airs of superior information. As they made no boast of coming to the rescue of the old bards on whom they commentated, or looked beyond the limits they had assigned to themselves; the sneer on the extent of their vision is unjust and inapplicable: but this finding out that *brass* should be *brau*, while the

relation of parts to parts, and they to the whole, in this scene of Pistol, introduced as it is in *Henry V.*, is a most satisfactory proof of the flea-like glance of Farmer. He hints (it is hard to catch any thing like a positive assertion in the *Essay*) that the French scene had appeared before in some other play on the same subject, — quoting from Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse, his Supplication to the Devil.* "What a glorious thing it is to have *Henry the Fifth* represented on the stage leading the *French king* prisoner, and forcing both him and the *Dolphin* to swear fealty." In the first place, "the French scene," if it be intended by that phrase to mean the scene written in French, had never appeared on the stage before; and, secondly, Shakespeare, by substituting Pistol's exploits for those of the king, escaped the ridicule directed against the elder plays, or mummeries, produced upon this popular subject, and made a jest of by Nash.

As for the pronunciation of *bras*, we are gravely told by Sir William Rawlinson, that almost every body knows that it is pronounced *brau;* and so Farmer's authorities and the commentators in general inform us. Pasquier, in his letters, laughs at the Scotch, by an *escorche*, or *Escoce*, turn madame into moudam.* What would he have thought of the rule which rhymes *bras* with *law*, *paw*, *jaw*, *daw*, *draw*, &c.? Davenant, quoted by Steevens in the notes, has made it do so; and Pope, we know, has some of the same kind in his "Town and Country Mouse":—

"—— lays down the *law*
Que ça est bon — ah! goutez *ça*" [saw].

So have many other; but, to borrow Johnson's words and argument on the passage in Shakespeare, which we are now

* "Comme nous voyons l'Escossois voulant representer nostre langue par un escorche, ou pour mieux dire par un Escoce François, pour Madame, dire Moudam."—*Récherches de la France*, p. 755. He did not forget Pantagruel and the Limosin.—W. M.

discussing, "if the pronunciation of the French language be not changed since [Pope's] time, which is not unlikely, it may be suspected that some other man wrote the [above distich]." *Bras* rhymes *now* with the first syllable of *fa*-ther. The question, however, is, Was the final *s* of such words sounded in Shakespeare's time? In correct, or fashionable French, it unquestionably was not, unless before a vowel; but just at that time a revolution was going forward among the French with respect to the sounding of *s*. Pasquier tells us, that in his youth (he died in 1615, aged 87), it was pronounced in *honneste*, and a little before in such words as *esehole*, &c., as now it is in *espéce*. Robert Stephens, in his grammar, says that "*ut plurimum omittitur*" in words of the kind; and Theodore Beza notes the variation of its sound in different places, as Bowle observes, in the *Archæologia*, vol. vi., pp. 76–'8. Pasquier, who has a long letter on the subject, thinks it probable that it was originally sounded in such words as corps, temps, aspre,—derived from corpus, tempus, asper. It really is a question hardly worth debating. That to *our* ears it was once sounded is plain, from the O yes retained by our criers; from our pronunciation of Paris, Calais, which we once held as masters, and other cities, Brusselles, Marseilles; of the names of Louis, Charles, &c. In my own memory, Bordeaux was generally pronounced Búrducks: in a passage quoted further on, from Laneham's letter from Killingworth, it seems in the days of Elizabeth to have been called Burdeaus. And, at all events, if it be of such moment, can not the most precise purist be satisfied by reading—"Est-il impossible d'eschapper la force de ton bras?—ah!" or "bras, sieur." I must remark that the French translator does not express the same doubt of the propriety of the pronunciation as the English critics. Le Tourneur merely says: "Bras est pris par Pistol pour le mot Anglois brass, du cuivre." His ears, it appears, are less sensitive than those of Hawkins or Farmer.

Pasquier might have afforded a hint to Malone, that when he said "the word *moy*" (in this same scene of *Henry V.*) "proves, in my apprehension decisively, that Shakespeare, or whoever furnished him with his French (if, indeed, he was assisted by any one), was unacquainted with the true pronunciation of the language," he was talking without full knowledge of the subject. He objects to *moy* being made a rhyme to *destroy*. Now, we find in a letter addressed by Pasquier to Ramus, on the occasion of the latter's French grammar, the following remarks: "Le courtisan aux mots douillets nous couchera de ces paroles: *Reyne, allét, tenét, venét, menét*. . . . . Ni vous ni moi (je m'asseure) ne prononcerons, et moins encores escrions ces mots de *reyne*, &c.; ains demeurerons en nos anciens qui sont forts, *royne, alloit, venoit, tenoit, menoit*."—P. 57, vol. ii., *Œuvres*. Ed. Amst. 1723. Again, in the same letter, of which he gives as the analysis, "Sçavoir si l'orthographe Françoise se doit accorder avec le parler," after stating that *oy* is a diphthong, "Qui est nécavec nous, ou qui par une possession immemoriale s'y est tournée en nature," he complains that Ramus has directed *moy, toy, soy*, &c., as if they were written *moé, toé, soé*, &c. "Car de ces mots moy, toy, soy, nos anciens firent moyen, toyen, soyen, moye, toye, soye. Comme nous voyons dans le *Roman de la Rose*, et autres vieux livres, que nous avons depuis eschangez en *Mien, tien*," &c. The fact is, that printing was then beginning to reduce in every country its national language to a common standard of pronunciation. Holofernes, in *Love's Labor's Lost*, complains of the rackers of orthography, who speak *dout* fine, when they should say dou*b*t, det for de*b*t, ca*u*f for calf (these are the men who pronounce *bras*, braw), &c. Pasquier is equally indignant against those who call *royne, réyne*, or *alloit, allét*. The *courtisans aux mots douillets*, of whom he elsewhere complains more at length (p. 46), as having in consequence of being nursed in *mollesse*, transferred "la pu-

reté de nostre langue en une grammaire tout effeminée," might have laid it down as a canon that *bras* and *moi* should be pronounced as we now have them. We may be sure there was some *patois* in Shakespeare's time to justify the pronunciation he adopted, and the neglect of which might once have been lamented by those who, like Pasquier, remembered with regret the old mode of talking; as the Scotch judge, who, in Lockhart's *Matthew Wald*, attributes the decadence of Scotland to the corruption of the tongue, which compelled people to call a *flay* a *flee*.* It is quite consistent with usual practice, in the midst of this learned exposition of Shakespeare's ignorance, to find Johnson informing us that a *moy* is a piece of money, whence moi d'or, or moi of gold. The Doctor would find it hard to discover the mint from which *moys* were issued. *Moidore* is Portuguese; *moeda* [*i. e.*, moneta] *de ouro*. It is, indeed, far easier to discovor ignorance in the variorum notes than in the text of Shakespeare.†

I have but two more instances with which to weary my readers; and of these shall take Farmer's last proof — his "irrefragable argument" — first:—

* "They might hae gaen on lang eneugh for me, if they had been content wi' their auld improvements o' ca'ing a flae, a flee; and a puinding, a pounding: but now, tapsal-teerie's the word."—P. 257.

† On the subject of coins, I may remark that, in *Timon of Athens*, Act III. scene 1, Lucullus, wishing to bribe Timon's servant, Flaminius, says to him, "Here's three *solidares* for thee." On which Steevens says, "I believe this coin is from the mint of the poet." Nares thinks otherwise; but being one of the most unlucky of conjectural critics, has nothing better to propose than *solidate*, from *solidata*, which is no coin at all, but a day's pay for a soldier. I have proposed, elsewhere, *saludore, i. e. salut d'or*, adopted into the English in the same form as *moidore*. Salutes, so called because they were stamped with a figure of the angelic salutation, were coined by Henry V. immediately after the treaty of Troyes. See Ruding's *Annals of the Coinage*, vol. ii. p. 308. Ducange has the word, "Salus et Salut. Nummus aureus, in Francia ab Henrico V., Rege Angliæ cusus," &c. In Rymer's *Chart.*, an. 1430, we have "pro summa quinqueginta milium salutiorum auri," &c. In Rabelais, liv. v. c. 54, "Neuf ceus quatorze *saluz d'or*" are given as marriage-portions to the girls who waited at table.—W. M.

"But, to come to a conclusion, I will give an irrefragable argument that Shakespeare did not understand two very common words in the French and Latin languages. According to the articles of agreement between the conqueror Henry, and the King of France, the latter was to style the former (in the corrected French of the former editions), 'Nostre très cher filz Henry, roy d'Angleterre;' and in Latin, 'Præclarissimus filius,' &c. 'What,' says Dr. Warburton, 'is *très cher* in French, *præclarissimus* in Latin? We should read *præcarissimus*,' This appears to be exceedingly true. But how came the blunder? It is a typographical one in Holinshed, which Shakespeare copied; but must indisputably have corrected, had he been acquainted with the languages. 'Our said father, during his life, shall name, call, and write us in French in this manner: 'Nostre très chier filz Henry, roy d'Engleterre; and in Latine, in this manner, Præclarissimus filius noster.' Edit. 1587, p. 574."

This proves neither more nor less than that Shakespeare followed Holinshed; and that Warburton was not over-reasonable in thinking that the poet ought to have turned verbal critic on the text of the historian? We now know that, in the treaty of Troyes, the French text faithfully represents the Latin. We have had an infinity of works on diplomacy since Shakespeare's time, and one of the most furious (and at the same time most comical) of his censors, Rymer, has supplied us with the *Fœdera*, among which the treaty may be found; but what means had Shakespeare, unless he turned parchment-hunter for the purpose, of knowing but that Holinshed had authority for marking a variance between the French and Latin text? Might not King Henry have been described as *most illustrious* in Latin, and *most dear* in French? Might it not have been imagined that the conqueror, fresh from the slaughter of Agincourt, would have, in the unknown tongue, been described by an epithet indicating his renown, won at the expense of the blood and the glory of France, while in the language of those upon whom his stern rule was forced, the epithet was changed for one indicative of affection? Or what is, I suppose, the truth, might not Shakespeare have copied right before him, as he found his text,

without bestowing a further thought upon the matter? As to his being ignorant of the meaning of *clarus* and *cher*, the notion is preposterous.

"Terre, terre, s'escria Pantagruel, je voy terre." I see land. One observation more, and I have done.

"It hath been observed, that the giant of Rabelais is sometimes alluded to by Shakespeare; and in *his* time no translation was extant. But the story was in every one's hand.

"In a letter by one Laneham, or Langham, for the name is written differently, concerning the entertainment at Killingwoorth Castle, printed 1575, we have a list of the vulgar romances of the age:—'King Arthurz Book, Huon of Burdeaus, Friar Rous, Howleglass, and Gargantua.' Meres mentions him equally hurtful to young minds with the *Four Sons of Aymon*, and the *Seven Champions*. And John Taylor had him likewise in his catalogue of *authors*, prefixed to *Sir Gregory Nonsence*."

The most ordinary readers, thanks to Sir Walter Scott, now know some thing more of one Laneham, or Langham, and "the entertainment at Killingwoorth Castle," than Dr. Farmer did; but let that pass. Let me pass also another question, whether the Gargantua of Langham was exactly that of Rabelais. From the company in which he is introduced, I think it probable that this Gargantua might have been one of the imitations of the original romance, in which (see Brunet's *Supplement*, and Rabelais) Arthur, and Merlin, and the heroes of the Greek fable, were inserted among the personages whom the great Alcofribas has immortalized. That Shakespeare had read Rabelais, I have no doubt; and if he read him at all, it must have been in French. Malone, who supposes such a supposition to be heresy, positively asserts that there was a translation of Rabelais in Shakespeare's time. It would be a rare treasure to a bibliographer if a copy were found. Farmer, however, who, in the above passage, asserts the contrary, is right—there was none; but he is wrong in thinking that there is no other intimation of

Shakespeare's acquaintance with Rabelais than the mere mention of Gargantua. The brawling boatswain, in the first scene of the *Tempest*, is evidently taken from Friar John. In the same emergency, they show the same riotous courage, bustling energy, and contempt for the apprehensions of others. The commands of the boatswain, "Down with the topmast; yare; lower, lower; bring her to try with main-course," &c., found their prototypes in many an order of John and his *pillot:* — "Au trinquet de gabie, inse, inse. Aulx boulingues de contremeaine. Le cable au capestan. Vire, vire, vire. Le main à l'insail, inse, inse. Plaunte le heaulme. Tiens fort à guarant. Pare les couets. Pare les escoutes. Pare les bolines. Amure babord. Le heaulme soubs le vent. Casse escoute de tribord, fils de putain. (Tu es bien aise, homme de bien, dist Frère Jean au matelot, d'entendre nouvelles de ta mère.) Vien du lo. Près du plain. Hault la barre. (Hault est, respondoient les matelots.) Taille vies," &c., &c.

In Ozell's not over-accurate translation: "Put the helm a-weather. Steady, steady. Hawl your aftermizen bowlines. Hawl, hawl, hawl. Thus, thus, and no nearer. Mind your steerage. Mind your steerage. Bring your main-tack aboard. Clear your sheets. Clear your bowlines," &c.

The boatswain's complaint of the inactivity of his passengers, and his cry of "A plague upon your howling," resemble John's indignation against Panurge: "Panurge le pleurart, Panurge le criart, to ferois beaucoup mieulx nous aydant ici, que la, pleurant comme une vasche," &c. The boatswain is "a wide-chapped rascal; and John is "bien fendu de gueule." (Liv. i. chap. xxvii.) Gonzalo declares he has great comfort in the boatswain, because there is no drowning mark upon him, his countenance being perfect gallows; and is positive that he will be hanged yet, "though every drop of water swear against it, and gape at wid'st to glut him." John entertains the same

opinion of Panurge: "Par le digne froc que je porte, dist Frère Jean à Panurge, couillon mon amy, durant la tempeste, tu as eu paour sans cause et sans raison; car tes destinées fatales ne sont à perir en eaüe. Tu seras hault en l'aer certainement pendu, ou bruslé guaillard comme ung père." The description of the tempest, given by Ariel, resembles in many particulars that in Rabelais:—

> "I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
> Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
> I flamed amazement. Sometimes, I'd divide,
> And burn in many places; on the topmast,
> The yards, and the boltsprit, would I flame distinctly,
> Then meet and join; Jove's lightnings, the precursors
> O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
> And sight-outrunning were not. The fire, and cracks
> Of sulphurous roaring, the most mighty Neptune
> Seemed to besiege, and make his bold waves tremble,
> Yea, his dread trident shake. . . . . .
> Not a soul
> But felt a fever of the mad, and played
> Some tricks of desperation."

"Le ciel tonner du hault, fouldroyer, esclairer, pluvoir, gresler, l'aer perdre sa transparence, devenir opaque, tenebreux, et obscurci, si que aultre lumière ne nous apparoissoit que les fouldres, esclaires, et infractions des flambantes nuées: les categides, thielles, lelapes, et presteres enflamber tout autour de nous par les psoloentes, arges, elicies, et aultres ejaculations etherées—nos aspects touts estre dissipez, et perturbez, les horrifiques Typhons surprendre les monteuses vagues du courant, &c. L. iv. ch. xlviii.

"Blow, till thou burst thee, wind," says the boatswain; and

> "The king's son, Ferdinand,
> With hair upstarting (then like reeds, not hair)
> Was the first man that leaped; cried, '*Hell is empty,*
> *And all the devils are here.*'"

So Friar John: "Tonnez, diables, petez, rottez, fiantez.....

Je croy que touts les millions de diables tiennent icy leur chapitre provincial, ou briguent pour election de nouveau recteur." And elsewhere: "Vrayment voicy bien esclairé, et bien tonné. Je croy que touts les diables sont deschainez aujourd'huy, ou que Proserpine est en travail d'enfant. Tous les diables dancent aux sonnettes." When Gonzalo is willing to "give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze [*r.* with Sir Thomas Hanmer, ling, heath, broom, furze], any thing. The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death"—we are reminded of Panurge, "Pleust à Dieu ——je feusse en terre ferme bien a mon aise," with his panegyric on the happiness of cabbage-planters, and Pantagruel's abhorrence of a death by water. "Je ne veulx entrer en la dispute de Socrates, et des Academiques; mort n'estre de soy maulvaise, mort n'estre de soy à craindre. Je dis cette espèce de mort par naufraige estre, ou rien n'setre à craindre. Car, comme est la sentence d'Homere chose griefve, abhoneste, et denaturée est perir en mer." It is not probable that these coincidences, and there are many more elsewhere, are accidental; but I may remark, that it is very certain that Sir John Hawkins, whom we have seen rebuking Shakespeare for ignorance of French, had not read Rabelais, the most famous French author of the times in which Shakespeare was born. In his remarkably trumpery life of Dr. Johnson, p. 304, ed. 1787 [I do not suppose there is any other], in order to show off his learning, Sir John introduces an extract from Sir Thomas Urquhart's account of the Admirable Crichton, given in Sir Thomas's usual style. Among other marvels related of the hero, we are told that, "immediately after that he domineers in a bare unlined gowne, with a pair of whips in the one hand, and *Corderius* in the other: and in suite thereof he *hondresponded* it with a pair of panier like breeches, a mountera-cap on his head, and a knife in a wooden sheath,

daggerways, by his side;" *i. e.* like a German of the day. Sir John Hawkins is much puzzled to account for "hondrespondcd," and affixes a note upon it: "For this strange word, no meaning can be found;" that is, can be found by Sir John Hawkins. It so happens, however, that the *strange* word is in Rabelais, whom this Sir Thomas Urquhart had translated. When the Gascon, Gratianauld, native of St. Sever, challenges the Germans, camping outside Stockholm, to fight him (lib. iii. c. xv.), they are called *hondrespondres*. "Ne respondant personne, il passe au camp des *hondrespondres;*" *i. e.* heavy fellows, weighing a hundred pounds. "Il a voulu," says Du Chat, "par ce mot de hondrespondres nous donner a entendre le *centumpondium* par lequel les Latins designant tout fardeau lourd même excedent le poids d'un quintal." As Sir John Hawkins did not know where to find any thing about a word in Rabelais so prominently introduced by Rabelais's translator, we may be excused from thinking *his* appreciation of Shakespeare's knowledge of the French of the sixteenth century of no surpassing value: as much, perhaps, as Dr. Farmer's knowledge of the language of him whom he calls "Hanssach the shoemaker."

Let this suffice. The "celebrated *Essay* of Dr. Farmer" is nothing more than a pitiful collection of small learning; useful, perhaps, occasionally, if intended to illustrate the author on whom he was writing — though, indeed, not remarkably valuable in that particular — but utterly contemptible in the employment to which he has assigned it. He has proved, what no one of common sense ever doubted, that Shakespeare in his classical plays did not look beyond the English translation of Plutarch, or in his historical plays beyond the popular annalist, Holinshed; and that, having made such a resolution, he adhered to their text, without further research. Lord Byron thought proper, as a sort of *tour de force*, to versify, in his *Don Juan*, passages taken from prose works; as, for instance, the

accounts of many real shipwrecks turned into the description of that in the second canto; the siege of Ismail in the seventh, taken from the "Essai sur l'Histoire Ancienne et Moderne de la Nouvelle Russie, par le Marquis Gabriel de Castelnau," &c. Now we find it stated by Lord Byron, in verse, canto vii. st. 8, that

> "The fortress is called Ismail, and is placed
> Upon the Danube's left branch and left bank;"

which is no more than a translation of Castelnau's prose "Ismaël est situé sur la rive gauche du bras gauche du Danube." Suppose Castelnau mistaken, and that the situation of Ismail was on the *right* bank, was Lord Byron bound to take the trouble of correcting it, any more than of measuring the distances and dimensions of the town, to ascertain, when he wrote, st. 9,

> "It stands some eighty versts from the high sea,
> And measures round of toises thousands three,"

that his French authority was correct to a toise or a verst in stating that it was "à peu près à quatre-vingts verstes de la mer: elle a près de trois milles toises de tour?" It would be just as rational as the complaint made by Farmer, that Shakespeare should have copied North's translation of Amyot's mistranslation, which represents Cæsar as having bestowed on the Roman people his gardens "on *this* side Tiber," instead of checking it by ascertaining that Plutarch had written περαν του ποταμου. With this discovery, and some clumsy joking upon Upton, and one or two others, who "had found in Shakespeare more than Shakespeare knew," the merits of the *Essay* cease. Nothing is proved of the want of learning of Shakespeare. He quotes no Greek; indeed, it would have been very strange if he had. Some commentators ignorantly suppose French or northern words to be Italian; and that is to serve as a proof that he who, upon proper occasion, makes true Italian quotations, knows nothing of the language. A few words of Spanish

occur in his plays; some of them had been quoted elsewhere: *ergo*, Shakespeare knew no Spanish. French and Latin abound in his plays; but as there is a supposed mispronunciation in the one, and a chance exists that sedulous hunting in the most out-of-the-way places might procure some store of the latter: *therefore*, we are to be certain that he knew nothing of either tongue. The consummation of impudence is the following:—

"I hope, my good friend, you have by this time acquitted our great poet of all piratical depredations on the ancients, and are ready to receive my *conclusion*. He remembered, perhaps, enough of his *school-boy* learning to put the *Hig, hag, hog*, into the mouth of Sir Hugh Evans; and might pick up in the writers of the time, or the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French or Italian; but his *studies* were most demonstratively confined to *nature* and his *own language*."

Who would believe that, in the works concerning which Dr. Farmer comes to this monstrous conclusion, very many whole sentences, and some hundreds of Latin, French, and Italian words, occur, always quoted and introduced with the most perfect propriety, and often with admirable felicity and wit? The very scene in which Farmer found this *Hig, hag, hog*, is a proof that Shakespeare knew a great deal more, and that he could afford to trifle with his knowledge. It is impossible to conceive the character of Holofernes in *Love's Labor's Lost*, or that of Dr. Caius in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, to have been written by a man not perfectly versant in Latin and French. All through the plays the style is filled with words derived from foreign languages, happily naturalized and adapted to the genius of our tongue. Minute allusions to what is to be found in various foreign literatures are abundant. There exists, in short, as much reason to charge Dr. Johnson with a want of knowledge of Latin or Greek, as Shakespeare. It is a position which I should not scruple undertaking to prove from his *Commentary*, if I were allowed to use the method of Farmer.

But I shall not detain my readers any longer. My object has been to show that, whether Shakespeare was possessed of learning or not, there is nothing in Dr. Farmer's celebrated *Essay* — an essay of which its author tells us "one of the first critics of the age declared it had for ever decided the question," — to convict the poet of ignorance; and, therefore, that all future editors may disencumber themselves of the Doctor's flippant labors. Any thing valuable in the pamphlet, and that is not much, has been duly gathered into notes, and there it may remain. The sophistry which turned into proofs of Shakespeare's ignorance the anxiety of Upton, and other scholars more learned than judicious, to find classical learning where nothing of the kind was thought of, or apply classical rules and technical denominations to plain English, is not worth preserving. Shakespeare must not be pronounced illiterate because Upton was pedantic, Warburton crotchety, or Colman, as Farmer assures us, better employed than in reading a translation of Ariosto. That ordinary readers should think only of the genius and eloquence, the wit and pathos, the profound reasoning and shrewd common-sense, conveyed in poetry exquisite in all styles, from the sublime to the grotesque, which are profusely scattered through every page of his works, and pay but secondary attention to those marks of learning which, in less-gifted compositions, would force themselves upon attention — is not to be wondered at; but there is no excuse for a commentator or "editor in form," as Farmer calls himself, who can not see in them any literary knowledge beyond *Hig, hag, hog.* It requires, in my opinion, no small quantity of reading of every kind to write a fit commentary on Shakespeare. Farmer unfairly says, "Those who apply solely to the ancients for this purpose may, with *equal wisdom*, study the *Talmud* for an exposition of *Tristram Shandy*." The libraries of Cambridge would have supplied Dr. Farmer with materials sufficient to

prove that much of the common-places of general drollery and story-telling—much of what fills the pages of the Joe Millers of Europe, had its origin in the Rabbinical writings, or the older traditions whence they were compiled; and that many an ordinary jest, and many a scrap of eccentric learning, in *Tristram Shandy*, is traceable to the *Talmud*, though Sterne did not go there to find them. A Hebrew reader, wishing to display his own erudition, rather than to explain his author, might cull from the rarely-opened Mischnas and Gamaras of Jerusalem and Babylon (and do it without much trouble or learning either, by merely turning over Bartoloccius),* materials to afford strange illustrations of any volume of Rabelaisian drollery; and, according as his task was executed, produce a work of pedantry or learning, of interest or of folly; but what analogy is there between the cases of Shakespeare and Sterne in the comparison here instituted? The chances that Sterne had ever read any Hebrew are rather small, still smaller that he was acquainted with even the Rabbinical letters in which the *Talmud* is written. No odds ever laid would be too great to set against his having, for a moment, consulted one of its pages. Can we say the same of Shakespeare and the classics? He may not, perhaps, have read Homer in the original Greek, though I see nothing in his plays to *prove* the contrary, and should receive any external evidence showing that he was acquainted with the language without surprise. Sure I am that nowhere has Shakespeare afforded us such an evidence of a want of critical reading of Homer, coupled with such a general ignorance of the ordinary rules of Greek grammar and metre, as Dr. Johnson in his note on the line "A caitiff recreant to my cousin Hereford," in *Richard II.*,

* Particularly in his third volume, where the *Talmud* is described at great prolixity. Some jokes, which passed on the middle ages as occidental, will be found at pp. 603–4.—*Bibliotheca Magna Rabbinica.*

Act I., scene 2. "Caitiff originally signified a prisoner [which it never did]; next a slave, from the condition of prisoners; then a scoundrel, from the qualities of a slave:—

Ημισυ της ἀρετης αποαινυται δουλιον ημαρ."

On this Holt White remarks, that the *learned* commentator, quoting from memory, "has compressed a couplet into a single line;" and most learnedly has he managed it. In the first place, it is a pleasant mark of scholarship to misquote one of the best-known and most frequently cited passages of the *Odyssey* —(if Shakespeare had done so!——); and, secondly, Eumæus, the divine swineherd, who speaks the lines, has to thank Johnson for a superfluous article (της ἀρετης), a false quantity (ἀποαινυται before δ), and an un-Homeric sentiment, by attributing to the "servile day" that which Homer attributes to the far-seeing Jove. We can not say of the Doctor as Mercury says of Charon—Ευγε παρωδεις. In commenting on a writer so multifarious, and drawing his allusions from such various sources as Shakespeare, it would indeed be absurd to confine ourselves solely to consulting classical writers for the purposes of illustration; but it would be equally absurd to neglect them altogether out of respect to a theory of his literary ignorance, conceived in impertinence, and supported by such weak reasons and paltry instances as those urged and adduced by Farmer. It seems to me just as reasonable to believe that Sterne *had* studied Rabbi Hakkadosh, as to maintain that Shakespeare had *not* read Virgil and Ovid, and was not master of the languages of France and Italy.

What I principally complain of, and what in fact induced me to write these papers, is the tone of cool insult displayed toward one of the greatest men that ever appeared in the world, by every puny pedant who had gone through the ceremonial of *Hig, hag, hog*. One tells us that Shakespeare had no ac-

quaintance with the history of literature. Here we are assured by a man who is not able to explain ordinary words of Italian or French, that Shakespeare could not have read these languages, and was obliged to look to translations for a scanty knowledge of Rabelais, Ronsard, or Montaigne. Want of knowledge of Latin is thrust upon him by persons superficially acquainted with its language or its literature, and who would assuredly blunder in any attempt to write it. Ritson accuses him of ignorance, because he has mixed names of different languages in *Hamlet*, the said Ritson not being able to distinguish Arthur of the Round Table from the constellation Arcturus;*

* Hamlet, Act I. scene 1. "The strange indiscriminate use of Italian and Roman names in this and other plays, makes it obvious that the author was little conversant in even the rudiments of either language."—*Ritson.* Sagacious reason, and worthy of the critic! We find in a letter of his to Robert Surtees, published by Sir Harris Nicolas, a request to have a translation made for him of a singular epigram by Bishop Aldhelm. Other learned persons had assisted him in this difficult work of recondite scholarship, but he was not satisfied; for "with these, such as they are, *and the help of Ainsworth's Dictionary, I have endeavored to make a sort of translation*, line for line, as well as I could." He then prattles about Arthure's, or King Arthur's Wain:—"Though I have never met with *Arthur's* wain in any book or map." Lydgate, Douglas, and Owen, are then referred to for Arthure's plough, Arthure's hufe, and Arthure's harp; and then come the "obscure and obsolete words" of Aldhelm. I give the first two lines, and Ritson's translation:—

"*De Arturo.*

Sydereis stipor turmis in vertice mundi
Esseda, famoso gesto cognomine vulgi."

"*Of Arthur.*

With starry troops I am environed in the pole of the world,
In a war-chariot, a famous surname of the people being born!"

"A famous surname of the people being born!" What *can* this mean? The bishop's verses relate to the star Arcturus; a line drawn from which, N. by N. W., falls in with the last star of the Great Bear, or the Charles's Wain. Arcturus is, therefore, made to say, that he bears the wain known by the famous *cognomen vulgi*—*i. e.* of the ploughman—the Churl's Wain, which in aftertimes was corrupted into the Charles's Wain. Ritson was deceived by the spelling usual in old manuscripts of Arturus for Arcturus ("Artus, non

men who know not the technical words of our courts are content to give him credit for a mere scrivener's knowledge of law; Cockneys, who could not tell the stem from the stern of a ship, find him guilty of not knowing seamen's language; Steevens is inclined to think that he had no means of ascertaining the names of the flowers of the field; critics of Hampstead or Fleet Street, "who never rowed in gondola," are quite certain that Italy was *terra incognita* to him; Johnson assures us that whenever he meddles with geography, he goes astray, the Doctor having, when he wrote the note, merely gone astray himself: in short, it would be easy to prove, from the assertions of Shakespeare's commentators, that there was nothing in the world — language, history, geography, law, theology, antiquity, art, science, down to domestic botany, in which his ignorance was not profound; but not more easy than to select from their own labors a most complete body of ignorance with respect to all the subjects on which they are most sarcastic and pungent, profound and dogmatic, at his expense.

It is not worth the labor to make the collection; I have only to conclude by willingly admitting that the readers of Shakespeare have good reason to be obliged to the commentators in general for what they have done — that they have considerably improved the text, explained many a difficult passage, interpreted many an obscure word, and, by diligent reading and

Arctus; scriptum video in antiquissimis libris præcipueque in Virgilio Carpensi," says Aldus Manutius, in his *Orthographiæ Ratio*, p. 77); and he accordingly passed Bishop Aldhelm's epigram (as he calls it, the bishop styles his compositions ænigmata) in the service of the Round Table. I do not know where he found it, but if it was in Aldhelm's *Poetica Nonnula*, edited by Delrio (Moguntiæ, 1601, p. 63), the preceding ænigma on the *vertigo poli*, which concludes with an allusion to the rapidity of the motion of the *septem sidera*, might have given him a hint. Whether Arcturus had any thing to do with Arthur, is a very different question indeed; but there is no question as to the utter ignorance of Latin manifested, and confessed, by this critic of Shakespeare's Latinity.—W. M.

research, thrown much light over the plays. For this they deserve their due portion of praise; those among them, especially, who thought less of themselves than of Shakespeare. They by no means merit the sweeping censures of Tooke, Matthias,* and others. I know, also, that commentators on works so voluminous, full of so many troublesome difficulties of all kinds, and requiring such an extended and diversified course of reading, *must* make mistakes, and therefore that their errors or rash guesses should be leniently judged; but no great leniency can be extended to those who, selecting the easiest part of the task for themselves — that of dipping into the most obvious classical writers — should, on the strength of very small learning, set themselves up as entitled to sneer at a supposed want of knowledge in Shakespeare, while their own criticisms and comments afford countless indications, "vocal to the intelligent," that they have themselves no great erudition to boast of.

Apologising to your readers for so long detaining them, through your indulgence, from pleasanter matter,

I have the honor to be,

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM MAGINN.

October 25 [*St. Crispin's Day*], 1839.

* In the *Diversions of Purley*, Tooke says, "The ignorance and presumption of his commentators have shamefully disfigured Shakespeare's text. The first folio, notwithstanding some few palpable misprints, requires none of their alterations. Had they understood English as well as he did, they would not have quarrelled with his language." And again: "Rack is a very common word, most happily used, and ought not to be displaced because the commentators knew not its meaning. If such a rule were adopted, the commentators themselves would, most of them, become speechless."—Vol. ii. pp. 389–91, 4to. Yet he departs from the folio to read "one dowle that's in my *plume*," for the folio *plumbe* in the *Tempest*, p. 259; and in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, his commentary alters the rack *dis limes* into *dis limbs*, p. 392. Matthias's attack on the commentators in his *Pursuits of Literature*, was once very popular. It is alluded to even by Schlegel.—W. M.

LAST NOTES UPON SHAKESPEARE.

THE *Quarterly Review* (No 130) contains an article upon Hunter's *Essay on Shakespeare's Tempest*, which very completely demolishes the theory of the reverend antiquary — annihilating it both in place and time.* It is indeed a hopeless quest to look for a physical site for Prospero's magic island, which must be somewhere in the same latitude as the Medamothi of Rabelais. But if we are to seek an actual island, Lampedusa, that chosen by Messrs. Hunter and Rodd, and apparently acquiesced in by Charles Knight, is quite out of the track. It is true that a tempest may whisk a vessel in any direction away from her course; but two other vessels — those which brought Sycorax and Prospero — had formerly arrived at the island. The sailors brought Sycorax from Algiers: surely they did not take the trouble of coasting along a large tract of North Africa, and doubling Cape Bon, which they must have done to make Lampedusa, with so disagreeable a burthen, which they could be so little anxious to keep long on their hands! Nor can we imagine that Prospero's crazy boat — or butt, as Mr. Hunter will have it, judiciously following the first folio — could have floated right across the Mediterranean, dexterously avoiding Corsica, Sardinia, Africa, and Sicily, in his hasty and ill-furnished voyage. We have, in fact, four points to guide us. The island is in the Mediterranean, a short voyage from the Gulf of Genoa, where Prospero was embarked — short, of course, for he was

* This article in the *Quarterly Review*, referring to Mr. Hunter's remarks on the Tempest, appeared in March, 1840.—M.

not provided for a long one. Also a short voyage from Algiers, for the sailors would get rid of Sycorax as fast as possible. And it must not be unreasonably far from the line from Tunis to Naples—the line on which the King's vessel was sailing when the tempest occurred. The points then lie thus:—

The island, then, must lie somewhere within the limits of this trapezium; and there are scores of islands there which, being volcanic, will supply all the phenomena recorded of Lampedusa by Cruziers, and others, quoted by Hunter. Many of them were magic isles in mythology many a century before Shakespeare. Among these the King of Tempests himself kept his court, in the *nimborum patria*, among the *loca fæta furentibus austris*. But, indeed, it is idle work to look for a locality for Prospero's island, any where but in the brain of Shakespeare. At all events, it is *not* Lampedusa.

At the commencement of this article, the Quarterly Reviewer says:—

"If there was one play of Shakespeare's which we might reasonably have hoped to enjoy in peace, without molestation from the commentators, that play was *The Tempest*. It appeared to us that the author had told all that could be known, or that it was necessary to know; that the text was so generally free from corruption as to be sufficiently clear even to the most ordinary reader, and to afford very few oppor-

tunities for the editor to display his cumbersome ingenuity in perplexing the difficulties which the ignorance of the printer's devil had originated; and that, in a work of so purely imaginative a character — of which scene, fable, persons, were all alike creations of the fancy — there could not by any accident be discovered the slightest ground on which an historical discussion or an antiquarian argument could be raised. But we were deceived. We, the humble adorers of the genius of Shakespeare, who are content to forget ourselves in the enchanting visions of his glory, and to enrich our minds by gleaning something from the boundless treasures of his wisdom, can very little divine what inventions that parasitic race of writers are capable of, who, without talent to produce any original work of their own, are always on the look-out for an occasion of hitching on their lucubrations in the form of notes, or hints, or suggestions, or inquiries, or illustrations, or disquisitions to the productions of authors of eternal name. Without power of motion in themselves, they collect in bunches, and fasten themselves like barnacles to the bottom of the vessel, which is scudding along briskly before the gale; and they never seem to encounter any difficulty in making good their hold."

This doctrine, if followed up, destroys the whole art of verbal criticism; and goes far to destroy commentary in general. If people are so enamored of a text as to think any remarks upon it superfluous, or impertinently intrusive, there is nothing easier for them than to read the text without commentary. But as to admire properly we should understand correctly, then, unless the reader has intuitive knowledge of all the difficulties of an author, he must condescend to consult those who have considered and endeavored to solve them. As for the errors of printers' devils, they are in general not very many, and seldom are they very important. The errors which deface the text of Shakespeare arise from another source — the utter carelessness or the gross ignorance of his player-editors. There is not a single page in their folio which does not contain a blunder: some contain a dozen. Now, to assert that there is something impertinent in removing these, is as reasonable as it would be to complain that the man who rubbed off dark spots and specks

from the lens of your telescope was an intrusive meddler, who disturbed your celestial meditations upon the glories of the heavens.

Johnson, though in general a most unlucky critic in this department, has some very fair observations upon verbal criticism in general, in the preface to his edition of Shakespeare :—

"The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critic would ill discharge his duty without qualities very different from dullness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor."

And again :—

"That a conjectural critic should often be mistaken can not be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best, he produces perhaps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

"It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention; and he that has once started a happy change is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

"Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the Bishop of Aleria to English Bently."

Suppose we take from this very *Quarterly Review* an instance where this minute labor would have saved the reviewer from puzzling himself into one of the most inconsequential of conclusions:—

"We detest this system of finding out in poetry what every thing means, and what every thing is derived from, and what every thing alludes to. Why, there was a gentleman, a little time ago, who, in a letter to some magazine or other, pretended to inform us what the '*one thing*' was which Sycorax did, and on account of which she was banished from her country, instead of being killed, as 'her mischiefs and sorceries terrible' had deserved. She was spared, he tells us, by the Home Office at Algiers, on account of her being *enceinte* with Caliban! A very ingenious conjecture certainly; but we feel assured that no such thought ever entered the mind of Shakespeare. He knew not what that '*one thing*' was, nor did he ever give his imagination the trouble of ascertaining it. He wanted it for the purpose of his play, as an excuse for saving a wretch who, according to the laws and the opinions of his age, was guilty of death; and he left it *a deed without* A NAME, not to be known by any for ever, but Hell, and Night, and Setebos!"

Who the magazine writer referred to may be, we know not; but he is evidently right: the life of Sycorax was spared by the sailors because she was *enceinte*. She could not have been spared because she had committed, as the Quarterly Reviewer strangely imagines, something too horrible to mention—some deed without a name, or pardoned *because* she had done what was fit only to be known in hell. It must have been some circumstance exciting compassion, not horror. The alteration of one letter makes it all plain—

——"for one thing she *hid*
They would not take her life."

Prospero always speaks of Caliban with the most profound contempt; he therefore here calls him a *thing*—as he does elsewhere. The sailors would not take the life of Sycorax, for the sake of the thing *which was hidden in her womb:* which, it is needless to say, is a common and usual form of expression. Perhaps Shakespeare wrote more graphically—

"——for *yon* thing she hid,"—

pointing in the direction of Caliban.

A remedy as simple will cure a line, which has been generally given up as incurable. The Duke of Bedford, in the first scene of *Henry VI. Part First*, speaking of Henry V., says:—

"A far more glorious star thy soul will make
Than Julius Cæsar, or bright——"

Pope most strangely supplied this imperfect line by "Francis Drake;" for which he is duly castigated at great length by Theobald. To say nothing of the violent anachronism (which is not at all analogous to that referred to by Pope, viz. Hector's quoting Aristotle in *Troilus and Cressida*, because Aristotle and Hector were equally foreign to Shakespeare's audience, and the anachronism was therefore not so glaring, whereas Drake was a far-famed contemporary of their own, whom they well knew to have flourished after their favorite king), Shakespeare, it may be remarked, makes no allusion to public persons of his own time, with the exception of Queen Elizabeth herself, and one compliment, not in the body of a play, but in one of the choruses of *Henry V.*, to his particular patron the Earl of Essex. The line may be easily mended. After the Duke of Bedford's speech, a messenger enters, and commences by saying:—

"My honorable lords, health to you all."

Read, "*Right* honorable lords;" and arrange the whole passage thus:—

"A far more glorius star thy soul will make
Than Julius Cæsar's *orb*.
M. *Right* honorable lords," &c.

The "*My* honorable" of the present text crept in from the *M.* of Messenger; and *orb right* were easily confounded into *or bright*.

Apropos of *Troilus and Cressida*, we are indebted to the Rev. Mr. Harness for communicating to us a most ingenious emendation of a line which, as it now stands, is unintelligible.

"Therefore this maxim out of love I teach,
Achievement is command — ungained, beseech."

On which Steevens remarks: "The meaning of this obscure line seems to be, Men, after possession, become our commanders; before it, they are our suppliants." This is indeed the meaning, but it is not so expressed. Read,

"*Achieved, men us command* — ungained, beseech."

"Men command us achieved, beseech us ungained:" a clear and plain sentence.

This does not appear in his edition; but to that edition we are indebted for the alteration of a single letter, which, small as it is, relieves the *Merry Wives of Windsor* from a mass of absurdity. In this play Dame Quickly is represented, as usual, ignorant, illiterate, and incapable of speaking a sentence of decent English; and yet to her vulgar mouth are committed the beautiful speeches addressed to the mimic fairies in the forest—

"Fairies, black, grey, green, and white," &c.,

some of which are elaborated with the most classical elegance. This absurdity is removed by reading *Que.* in the stage direction for *Qui., i. e. Queen* (the queen of the fairies), for *Quickly.* And perhaps *quickly* was part of the speech. It would tend to make its first line of the due length: —

"*Queen.* Quickly, ye fairies, black, grey, green, and white, &c.

As Anne Page is the queen: —

("My Nân shall be the queen of all the fairies,
Finely attired in a robe of white,")

it will give her something more to do than she has by the present arrangement, in which her part is rather scanty.

THE END.

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